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ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLEPLAYING GAMES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1999
ISSUE #72

He saw what must be the White Witch's House ... It seemed to be all towers; little towers with long pointed spires on them, sharp as needles. They looked like huge dunce's caps or sorcerer's caps. And they shone in the moonlight and their long shadows looked strange in the snow.

— C. S. Lewis
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

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The streets of Jevid are crawling with life—and unlife.

NO STONE UNTURNED

BY PETER C. SPAHN

Unearthed arcana

Artwork by George Vrbanic
Cartography by Craig Zipse

This is Peter's third appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures *(and probably not his last). He wants to thank his new wife, Miranda, and his players Singin, Wade, Dale, and Chester for their support.*

"No Stone Unturned" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4–6 player characters of levels 3–5 (about 20 total levels). The adventure takes place in the port city of Jevid but, with some minor adaptations, can fit into any small or moderately sized coastal city.

The adventure begins with an investigation, and the PCs must do the obligatory legwork and clue finding before they can identify their real adversaries. It is imperative that the players understand they are not adventuring in some remote and lawless dungeon. Jevid is a living, breathing city with its own set of laws and customs. Full-scale combat within the city is not tolerated, and the murder of any of its citizens is certain to land the PCs in jail no matter how evil their victim.

DMs wishing to insert this module into an existing AD&D campaign world need to make a few revisions. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting, replace the Osani with the Zhentarim. Suitable replacements for the gods Telluri, Onadar, and Payanel are Waukeen, Cyric, and Ilmater respectively. Jevid might be located in the Pirate Isles or somewhere along the rocky coastline of Turmish.

In the GREYHAWK® setting, replace the Osani with the Scarlet Brotherhood. The above mentioned gods could be replaced by Xerbo, Nerull, and Zodal respectively, and the city could be located on the Wild Coast or anywhere along the Aerdi Sea, in what was once the Great Kingdom.

Beginning the Adventure

Jevid is a port city nestled in a rocky, mountainous region. Jevid is a rough city, and many merchants refuse to dock here. However, as it is located close to a trade route, it is often a port of call for smugglers and pirates. Almost any item can be bought or sold in Jevid (DM's discretion) at prices comparable to those listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

Zombie Attack

This encounter can take place any time the PCs are walking through the city streets. Read or paraphrase the following:

> The streets are crowded, and you pay special attention to your money pouch as you walk through the city. Suddenly, you are stopped in your tracks. Blinking your in disbelief, you see the body of a dead man standing in front of you, in a spot you were certain was empty but a moment ago. The vacant eyes of the corpse stare in your direction. It wears a soiled loincloth, and dirt falls from its unkempt hair and beard. With a chilling moan, it raises a pickaxe and advances toward you.

The zombie materializes directly in front of the PCs and attacks. PCs who are not surprised automatically win initiative for that round. Surprised PCs cannot attack until the round following the zombie's initial attack.

Zombie: INT non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or 1d8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic, poison, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; *MM*/373; footman's pick.

The crowd panics at the sight of the undead creature, and the PCs soon find the street empty except for the zombie and themselves. City guards arrive on the scene shortly after the zombie appears and question everyone in the area (including the PCs). Once the combat has ended, they have the zombie's remains removed to the Church of Telluri.

Nothing else strange happens to the PCs that day. That night, speculation about the zombie attack abounds. If the PCs listen, they find that at approximately the same time, two other zombie attacks occurred in the city, although this number increases to twelve by the end of the night. Each attack is frightfully similar to the PCs' encounter, but no one knows any other details. Some say the zombies are scouts for a vast legion of undead that is preparing to assault the city, while others maintain they are an omen of worse things to come.

The Job

The day after the encounter, the PCs are approached by Lora Garian, a successful, middle-aged merchant who has heard that the PCs were involved in one of the zombie attacks. She wishes to hire them to find out who is responsible for bringing the zombies back to life. Lora explains that she inherited Garian Shipping Company from her father, Beruce, when he died. Until yesterday, she thought his body rested peacefully in the earth. Instead, she was called down to the Church of Telluri to identify one of the zombies as her father (not the one the PCs fought).

Lora Garian (0-level human merchant/trader): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 12, C 10, I 13, W 11, Ch 14; SZ M; ML 9; jeweled knife (25 gp), purse containing 15 gp.

Upset over the incident, Lora had a long discussion with church officials. They assured her that the cemetery is part of church ground, which is blessed, and that no undead could arise from it. They even took her to the grave site, finding it undisturbed, although they have refused to allow her to dig up her father's grave, claiming that would be sacrilege. The priests believe that exhuming the dead, for any reason, is an affront to Telluri and that to do so would result in severe consequences.

Lora can pay the PCs 50 gp each plus any reasonable expenses (such as food and lodging) to find out who is responsible for this unholy act and bring them to justice. Also included in the fee is *The Sad-Eyed Lady*, a pirate knarr (see *Of Ships and the Sea*, page 8) that was recently captured by one of her merchant escort ships. In its present condition, the vessel is worth 6,000 gp.

Lora is a business woman who has garnered much respect in her circles. She is a shrewd dealer and rarely makes bad decisions. Although she did love her father, love is not the reason she is hiring the PCs. The truth is that common folk are superstitious, and any association between her family and undead could be disastrous for business.

Lora does not have any leads for the PCs to follow, but she believes they must act quickly if they wish to find the culprit. The appearance of the zombies has caused quite a stir throughout the city and might have already sent those responsible into hiding. As far as she knows, the Church of Telluri buried her father in the grave, and that was the last time she saw him. She has been told that the church is conducting its own investigation into the incident but feels that they have their own interests to protect. The zombie remains are being held at the church, and if the PCs want to examine them, Lora tells them to ask there for a friend of hers—a young priest named Griffin Petroff.

For the Dungeon Master

Almost 200 years ago, the city of Jevid was rocked by a small earthquake, and several blocks were swallowed into the earth. The survivors of the quake above ground assumed that the wharf/waterfront area had been completely destroyed. What they didn't know was that it actually fell into a natural underground cave and remained largely intact but buried under a huge slab of rock that slid into place above it during the quake.

One of the buildings that was buried was a tower belonging to a group of evil mages known as the Triad. Several powerful magical wards went into the construction of the tower, and although partially destroyed by the quake, the spells protecting the tower were sufficient to keep it and its contents from being completely destroyed.

Several years ago, a criminal organization called the Osani came across a dusty tome that detailed the location of the Triad tower in ancient Jevid. In the book were references to the protective spells placed upon the tower, and they reasoned that magic might have kept the tower preserved even under tons of rock. They dispatched a small team (Dylan and Mandarich) to contact their agent (Imlik) in Jevid and conduct a covert excavation beneath the city. (See "The Osani" sidebar for details.)

When Dylan and Mandarich arrived, Imlik quartered them in one of his warehouses near the docks. They immediately began to excavate, Mandarich using several *dig* spells to tunnel into the earth. He soon broke into a series of natural caves. After a

The Osani

The Osani are an organization of Lawful Evil individuals belonging to various races and classes. Its leaders are usually high-level mages or priests of Onadar, Lord of the Dead. The Osani are always seeking to increase their strength and holdings through conquest. To this end, they frequently dispatch Osani adventurers to steal, trade for, or plunder rare magical items to aid them in battle. The Osani identify themselves to each other with a complicated series of signals and hand gestures.

There are three major Osani adversaries in this adventure. As there is no set location for them to encounter the PCs, their statistics have been included below.

Imlik

Imlik is extremely intelligent, crafty, and ruthless. He is nearly 50 years old, thin and balding, with a hawk nose and craggy features. Having lived in Jevid for several years, he is in charge of all Osani dealings in this region even though he is a 0-level NPC with no class skills.

Imlik has a photographic memory and never completely forgets a face, map, or anything else he has ever seen or read.

Imlik: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +3 magical defense adjustment; S 7, D 14, C 10, I 17, W 17, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 14; XP 35; 15 gp, 25 sp, golden ring with personal seal (150 gp).

Dylan

Dylan is short, stocky, and well built with a swarthy complexion. He is 35 years old, most of those years spent in the service of the Osani as a priest of Onadar, Lord of the Dead.

Technically, he is in charge of this operation but has deferred using his rank over Imlik or Mandarich, both of whom he considers at least his equals in intelligence. He thinks of Imlik as little more than a petty crime lord and has no love for Mandarich, although he respects the mage's insight and ability.

Dylan: AL LE; AC 2; MV 12; P6; hp 42; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); SA spells; SD special; S 16, D 15, C 16, I 13, W 17, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 18; XP 975; *chain mail +1* that bestows upon its wearer the equivalent of a *protection from normal missiles* spell, shield, *footman's flail +1*, 75 gp, 33 sp, three potions of *healing*.

Spells Memorized: 1st—*cure light wounds* (×2), *cause fear, detect magic, sanctuary*; 2nd—*dust devil, hold person* (×2), *heat metal, wyvern watch*; 3rd—*animate dead, cause blindness*.

Mandarich

Mandarich is 38 years old, tall, and lanky. He was the mage who originally found the tome detailing the location of the Triad tower in ancient Jevid. He is well versed in Triad lore (as much of it as has survived) and was considered the best mage to take the job because of his extensive studies into that defunct group's workings. While he is loyal to the Osani, he came to Jevid as much for his own interests as theirs and already plans to keep some of the tower's loot for himself.

Mandarich: AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; W7; hp 24; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; SA/SD spells; S 13, D 16, C 15, I 17, W 14, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 16; XP 1,400; quarterstaff, dagger, *cloak of protection +2*, potion of *gaseous form*, 16 gp, 52 sp, gold bracelet (25 gp), gold necklace (35 gp). Both the necklace and the bracelet radiate magic from a *Nystul's magic aura*.

Memorized Spells: 1st—*alarm, audible glamer, magic missile, shield*; 2nd—*invisibility, knock, web*; 3rd—*hold undead; monster summoning I*; 4th—*Evard's black tentacles*.

The clasp of Mandarich's spellbook has been *wizard locked* shut. In addition, the first page of the book has been inscribed with an *explosive runes* spell.

1st—*armor, cantrip, chill touch, dancing lights, detect magic, detect undead, feather fall, identify, Nystul's magic aura, protection from good, read magic, wall of fog, wizard mark*.

2nd—*continual light, detect invisibility, pyrotechnics, spectral hand, strength, summon swarm, wizard lock*.

3rd—*dispel magic, feign death, gust of wind, hold person, lightning bolt, phantom steed, vampiric touch, wraithform*.

4th—*contagion, dig, monster summoning II, shadow monsters, shout, wizard eye*.

brief exploration, Dylan and Mandarich realized they would need more manpower to continue the excavation, as tunneling under the city with a *dig* spell was far too dangerous and time consuming.

Not wanting to bring in living workers who might leak information about what they were doing, Imlik called in a favor from Powlus Quinn, an undertaker with a large gambling debt. Imlik instructed Powlus to replace newly arrived corpses with carefully prepared mannequins. Dylan and Mandarich then retrieved the corpses, *animated* them, and used them to dig underground. They also used Powlus' business as a front to acquire the items they need (digging supplies, lumber, and so forth).

Their exploration of the underground caves eventually led them to the ruins of the city of Jevid. Many buildings remained intact, and many other areas were intact but separated from the main cave by fallen rocks. They also soon found that the city was inhabited by a group of mongrelmen (see "The Mongrelmen" sidebar).

When the Osani plunderers first discovered the ruined city and its degenerate inhabitants, they tried to make contact with them in hopes of using the creatures to discover the location of the Triad Tower. The mongrelmen were terrified of the men and their zombie workers, and they hid from them. The Osani became annoyed trying to communicate with the creatures and now ignore them completely.

Dylan and Mandarich explored the ruined city for some time before finding the ruins of the tower which years ago had been blocked off from the main cave by fallen rocks. After defeating the glyphs on the entranceway, they searched the tower and eventually found the treasury vault.

Guarding the vault was a crypt thing. It told them to leave or be destroyed. Dylan instructed his zombies to attack, trying to gauge the undead guardian's strength. The crypt thing simply teleported these undead into the city above. The PCs encountered one of these zombies. Thinking they had stumbled across a powerful undead creature, the Osani beat a hasty retreat out of the tower, needing time to think things through.

Dylan and Mandarich have since met with Imlik. After hearing of the encounters during the day, they realized that the zombies were not, in fact, destroyed. The three have since been conducting research in Imlik's personal library to learn more about of the creature that guards the vault.

Keyed Encounters in Jevid

1. The Church of Telluri. The PCs should begin their investigation at the Church of Telluri, as there are currently no other leads except the zombies themselves.

Telluri is the lawful neutral god of trade, wealth, and fair dealing. Her followers are mainly from the merchant class, although many artists, laborers, and upper-class thieves are lured to her ranks.

Currently, the members of Telluri's clergy are in an uproar. All of the undead that appeared yesterday were citizens supposedly buried in their cemetery. They fear that they have fallen out of favor with Telluri and are reluctant to ask for outside help, as they do not want to lose the faith of their followers. Similarly, the high priest is afraid to use a *commune* spell, fearing what the goddess might say. If the PCs speak about the zombie incident with any priest other than Petroff, they are treated rudely and instructed to mind their own business. Petroff is the only one who helps them in any way.

Griffin Petroff: AL LN; AC 10 (4 with armor and shield); MV 12; P3; hp 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; SD +1 magic defense adjustment; S 14, D 10, C 15, I 9, W 15, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 13; holy symbol, chain mail, shield, footman's mace, 5 gp.

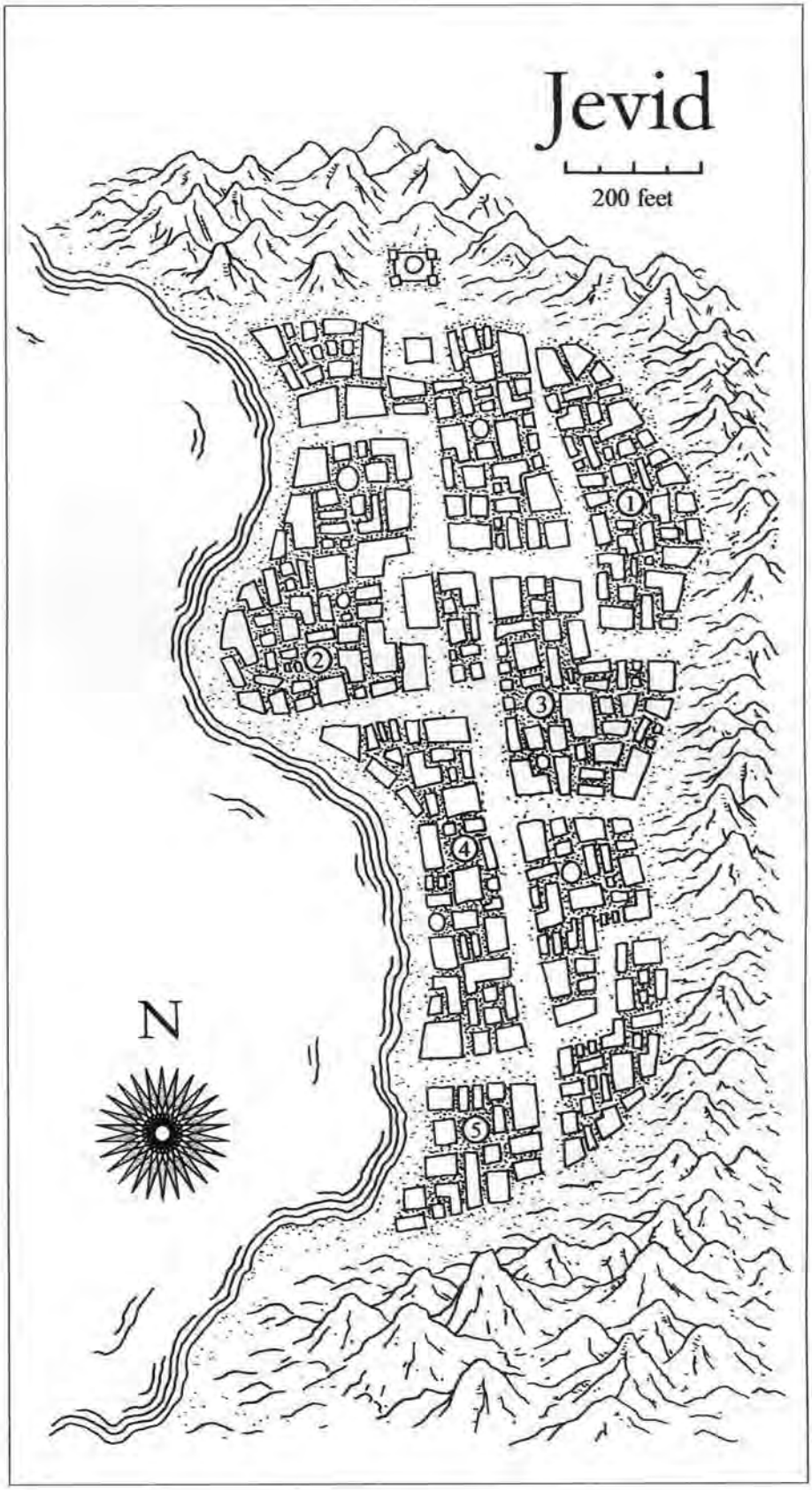
Memorized spells: 1st—*bless, cure light wounds* (×2), *sanctuary*; 2nd—*slow poison, spiritual hammer*.

Petroff is always at the temple during the day. He is 26 years old, blond haired, and broad shouldered. He has been a member of the clergy for the past eight years. Lora used to babysit Griffin and his sister when they were younger, and the boy has always had a fondness for her.

Lora Garian told Griffin that someone might be coming to examine the remains. Once introduced, he leads the PCs to where the zombies are kept.

The remains are held in a cool room in the rear of the temple. Incense burns in the room, barely covering the earthy smell of the corpses. The zombies have been laid out on grass mats. Resting upon a table is the equipment each of them carried or wore: pickaxes and dirty loincloths. The pickaxes are fairly new, but their points have been blunted from digging in hard stone.

If the PCs desire, Petroff can show them Beruce Garian's grave located in the cemetery behind the church. The ground is undisturbed, and any



PC who makes a successful Mining or Stonemasonry proficiency check at +4 or an unmodified Intelligence check realizes that the ground in the graveyard is much too soft to warrant a pickaxe. Dwarven PCs realize this automatically.

If asked about the burial procedure, Petroff explains that an independent undertaker, Powlus Quinn, prepares the body for burial. The body is then returned to the church where mourners attend an open coffin service, after which the deceased is interred in the cemetery by Powlus and his sons. If asked about Powlus, Petroff explains that despite a few vices (gambling, an occasional drink), the undertaker is a loyal member of the church.

If the PCs return to the cemetery after hours and dig up Garian's grave (something Petroff does not allow), they find a wax-faced, wooden mannequin inside. This should lead them to believe that Powlus is involved.

If asked where one might buy pickaxes in Jevid, Petroff gives them the names of several supply stores including Hetterman's Hardware (where, unknown to Petroff, Powlus does most of his business). Petroff can direct the PCs to Hetterman's store, which is conveniently close to Powlus' mortuary.

Throughout the course of the adventure, Petroff offers to help the PCs by healing minor wounds for free, providing a reasonable amount of holy water, and so forth. He does not betray his church or its priests, however, and politely refuses to answer any questions regarding the church's investigation into the zombies' creation.

If the PCs visit the church and Petroff more than three times, Imlik finds out about it and hires some thugs to kidnap Petroff during his morning walk. (The DM should devise statistics for these thugs if necessary.) Imlik, wearing a cloth mask, then questions Petroff about the PCs. He then has the priest beaten (reduced to 0 hp) and left unconscious some place the PCs are likely to find him as a warning to abandon their investigation.

2. Hetterman's Hardware. This establishment is contained in a one-story building. Harold Hetterman, the store's proprietor, sells tools, gardening supplies, and some adventuring equipment. Hetterman lives in cramped quarters at the rear of the store.

Harold Hetterman (0-level human trader): AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 10, C 9, I 11, W 8, Ch 7; SZ M; ML 7; XP 15; dagger, 5 sp, coffer containing 102 sp and 325 cp under bedroom floor.

Harold is a shifty-eyed, sweaty man with greasy black hair. He is always trying to find a new way to make money with the least amount of effort and risk.

If asked about Powlus or his purchases, his eyes narrow, and he responds, "Well, that's some *gold* information isn't it? I suppose a feller'd be *coin* crazy for information as important as that!" He then raises his eyebrows expectantly.

If the PCs offer him a bribe, he admits that he knows very little. His reference to "gold" is misleading, as he is willing to give the same information for a few silvers.

He explains that not long ago, in addition to his normal order (hammers, nails, varnish, and other coffin-building supplies) Powlus bought two dozen pickaxes and ordered a good bit of lumber. His people picked these items up a few weeks ago, strangely, at night. Harold knows nothing else and can't remember anything about the men who picked the supplies up other than there were two of them. If offered more coin, he happily gives the PCs a bogus description of Dylan and Mandarich. This could eventually confuse the PCs as to the number of people involved. Harold knows nothing about the arrangement between Imlik and Powlus or Powlus and the two "mystery men."

If asked, Harold shows the PCs what kind of pickaxes he keeps in stock. They are identical to the ones carried by the zombies, only sharper.

3. Quinn and Sons. Powlus Quinn runs his business from a two-story building in the center of town. He lives in the upstairs room with his wife and two sons. His sons are also his apprentices in line to take over the family business. They do the grave digging and other menial work while he alone prepares the bodies.

Powlus Quinn (0-level human undertaker): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 8, C 11, I 12, W 9, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15; unarmed; 10 sp and 16 cp in pouch.

Trew (0-level human gravedigger): AL LN; AC 9; MV 12; 0-level; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 8, D 15, C 11, I 7, W 8, Ch 11; SZ M; ML 9; dagger, 1 sp, 10 cp. Trew is 12 years old and wants to become an adventurer. He is very interested in the PCs and asks them a lot of questions about their adventures if given the chance.

Halotz (0-level human gravedigger): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 2; THAC0 21; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 6, D 14, C 11, I 7, W 8, Ch 9; SZ S; ML 7; unarmed; 5 cp. Halotz is 8 years old and idolizes his spirited older brother.

By now the PCs should at least be suspicious of Powlus and might even consider him an evil man. Actually, that is not entirely true. Powlus has always had a gambling problem and eventually ended up owing a large sum of money he could not afford to pay to one of Imlik's many gambling houses. Instead of crippling him, Imlik decided to withhold the debt until future payment.

Powlus has stopped gambling completely and is very thankful to Telluri for seeing him through that hard time. He was just beginning to breathe easy again when he was contacted by Imlik and informed of his new task: to replace the bodies of the dead with mannequins and allow the corpses to be fetched by Imlik's men.

Powlus had no other choice but to comply. At first he felt he had gotten off easy and gave little thought to what Imlik's men did with the bodies. Powlus has since come to his senses and is plagued with guilt. The only thing that keeps him from surrendering to the authorities is his nagging suspicion that many of the city officials are Imlik's pawns; Powlus fears that exposing Imlik's operation might endanger not only himself, but also his family.

If the PCs approach Powlus with evidence of his guilt, he privately confesses how and why he has been replacing the bodies with mannequins. He tells them everything he knows about Imlik and gives them an

accurate description of Dylan and Mandarich, the two men who come to pick up the bodies. He also tells them he has seen the horse and wagon that Dylan and Mandarich use to pick up the corpses parked outside of an old warehouse near the docks. He is not sure, but he believes the warehouse is owned by Imlik.

Powlus knows that Imlik's criminal network is extensive, and that Imlik himself is dangerous and well connected. He asks the PCs for their advice on what he should do to set things right and offers to help them in any way he can without risking himself or his family any more than he already has.

4. Imlik's Money-Lending Shop. Imlik's shop is a two-story affair located in a seamy section of the city. The lower level consists of a waiting area with several chairs and sofas and a single office where Imlik conducts his business. At least two of his bodyguards remain in the room with him at all times, and the others are always just a call away.

The upper level contains Imlik's personal accommodations and those of his bodyguards. The upper level also contains a well-stocked library. While none of the books in the library are magical, many of the texts contain information on magic and magical creatures. These books, thirty in all, are worth 5d20 gp each to an interested buyer.

Imlik keeps no treasure in his office or quarters. He uses credit vouchers stamped with his personal seal ring that can be used at any local shop or redeemed for coins at the City Bank of Jevid. Imlik owns many properties in and around Jevid and keeps his personal treasures stashed in various hiding places throughout the city just in case he has to leave quickly.

The city of Jevid has no official Thieves' Guild; instead, Imlik runs all facets of organized crime in and around the city. To aid him, he has divided the city into districts and appointed "bosses" to run the illegal operations in their own sectors. Most of the city's officials have been bought off by Imlik, either with coin or blackmail, and he is no danger from the local authorities. Although he poses as a money lender, most folk know he is connected with the city's underworld and that he is not a man to be crossed. Very few know just how well connected he is, and even fewer suspect he is affiliated with the Osani.

Imlik was skeptical of the rumors of ruins beneath Jevid and then jealous when Dylan and Mandarich uncovered them. He doesn't like or trust either man, and he feels that he should have been in charge of organizing a team to search the ruins.

Imlik is noncombative and, if attacked, attempts to flee or surrender depending on the circumstances. He keeps five bodyguards with him at all times. These five men have been with Imlik for several years and are loyal to him. They know he is linked to the Osani and hope to join the ranks of the organization themselves one day.

Robert (3rd-level human fighter): AL LE; AC 4; MV 12; F3; hp 25; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3 (Strength bonus); S 18/04, D 11, C 15, I 12, W 10, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65; chain mail, shield, broad sword, dagger, 5 gp and 17 sp in pouch.

Clarke (2nd-level human fighter): AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; F2; hp 18; THAC0 19 (17 with crossbow); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA missile attack; S 13, D 9, C 13, I 12, W 7, Ch 8; SZ M; ML 14; XP 65; chain mail, *light crossbow +2*, 24 quarrels, hand axe, dagger, 2 gp, 25 sp.

Waylan (4th-level human wizard): AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; W4; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; SA spells; S 7, D 16, C 11, I 16, W 11, Ch 9; SZ M; ML 13; XP 175; quarterstaff, dagger, spellbooks, *ring of protection +1*, 25 gp, two gems (worth 50 gp each).

Memorized spells: 1st—*hold portal, magic missile* (×2); 2nd—*mirror image, ray of enfeeblement.*

Burk (3rd-level human priest of Onadar): AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; P3; hp 20; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; SA spells; S 14, D 8, C 13, I 9, W 15, Ch 12; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120; chain mail, morning star, scourge, 15 gp, 30 sp.

Memorized spells: 1st—*bless, command, cure light wounds* (×2); 2nd—*hold person, spiritual hammer.*

Twist (5th-level human thief): AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; T5; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (×3 damage); SD rogue abilities; S 9, D 17, C 7, I 14, W 8, Ch 6; SZ M; ML 13; XP 420; leather armor, *short sword +1*, three throwing daggers, 12 gp, 22 sp, 30 cp.

Thieving abilities: PP 20%, OL 30%, FRT 25%, MS 75%, HS 80%, DN 15%, CW 70%, RL 10%

If the PCs confront Imlik at any time during the adventure, they must be careful about what they say to him. Imlik speaks to the PCs calmly and rationally, denying any knowledge of body snatching or other criminal activities. He asks the PCs where they got their information. If they refuse to say, he advises them to go to the authorities if they are so certain of his guilt. PCs with access to *ESP* or similar spells might be able to learn more, but if any spell is cast in Imlik's presence, his bodyguards immediately attack.

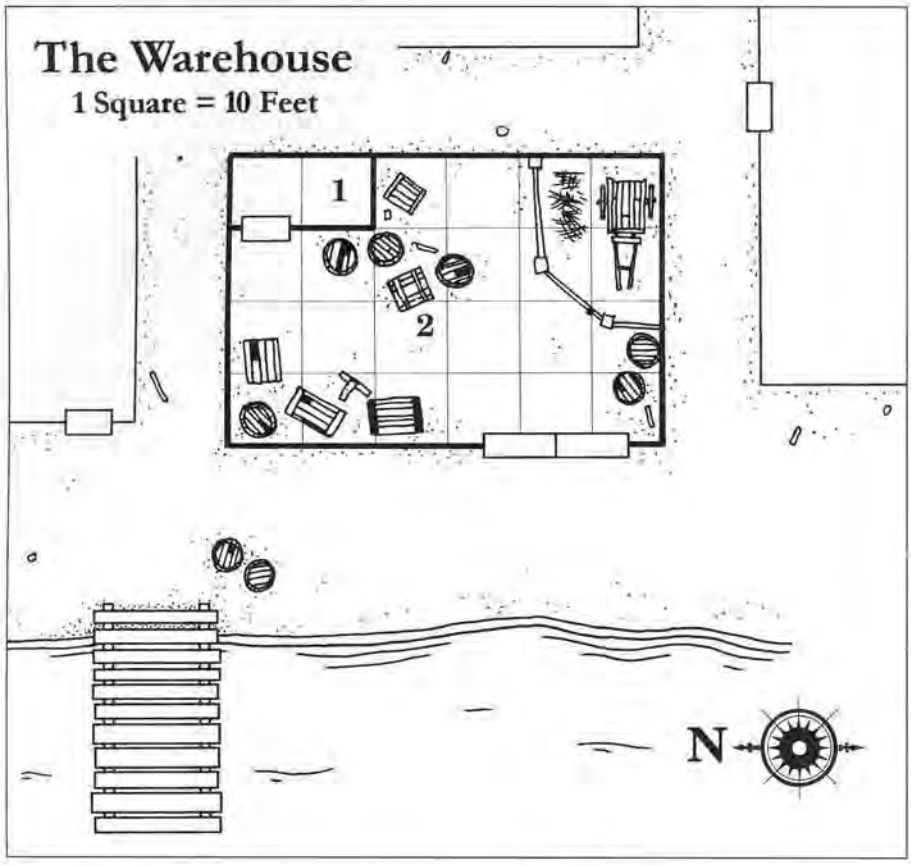
Imlik is not stupid, and any indication that the PCs received their information from Powlus (such as repeating things only Powlus would know), results in the undertaker being kidnapped, beaten, questioned, and eventually killed.

If the PCs confront Imlik before Dylan and Mandarich enter the ruins, he sends Twist to the warehouse to warn the two to keep a lookout for the meddlesome PCs.

5. The Warehouse. The warehouse is located near Jevid's wharf district. It is a two-story building with a ground floor and a high ceiling lined with rafters. The windows are located 15 feet off the ground and are shuttered and locked. Both the personal door and double doors have been *wizard locked* by Mandarich.

Imlik bought this property many years ago, and it has served various illegal functions since then. He keeps several crates and boxes in the warehouse to give it the illusion of being used for storage. These crates are filled with shipping supplies, sail patches, ropes, tools, and other seafaring equipment. Close inspection of these items reveals that most of the merchandise is of poor quality and has been here a long time; the canvas sails are rotted, tools are rusted, ropes frayed, and so forth.

Stabled in a makeshift corral in the southeast corner of the warehouse is the horse and cart that



Dylan and Mandarich use to transport supplies and corpses.

Draft horse: INT animal (1); AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3 (bite); SZ L; ML 7; XP 65; *MM*/194.

Warehouse Interior

1. The Office. The office contains a desk, chairs, a table and several cots. The door and shutters have been *wizard locked* by Mandarich.

Dylan and Mandarich have been living here ever since they came to Jevid. Stored inside are their extra clothes, various personal effects, and normal supplies.

2. False Crate. This empty crate can be pushed aside to reveal a roughly hewn shaft that descends into darkness. A rope ladder is coiled at the top of the shaft.

The shaft is 70' deep and leads to The Caves (see below). If Dylan and Mandarich are in the ruins when the heroes uncover the shaft, the ladder is unrolled.

Dylan has inscribed a *glyph of warding* 10 feet below the rim of the shaft. Anyone failing their saving throw is automatically paralyzed, losing their hold on the ladder and suffering 6d6 hp damage from the fall. The *glyph* may be detected normally provided the PCs have some form of light with them.

Villains on the Move

The PCs must move quickly if they want to discover who is really behind the zombie creation. The Osani's actions during this adventure are already predetermined and can be altered only by PC intervention. A time line has been included for easy reference (see sidebar on adjacent page), but the DM may lengthen the sequence of events if the players appear stumped at any time during the adventure.

The same day the characters are contacted by Lora Garian, Imlik closes his shop to consult with Dylan and Mandarich about what kind of creature they encountered in the tower. They remain locked in Imlik's library doing research until late that night. A few hours before dawn, Dylan and Mandarich leave Imlik's shop and return to the warehouse.

Dylan and Mandarich spend the rest of that day at the warehouse preparing to enter the ruins. They use the time to rest and memorize spells. Both are aware that time is running out and suspect that the appearance of the zombies may have already aroused unwanted attention.

On the morning of the fourth day after the PCs are attacked by the zombie, Dylan and Mandarich climb down the shaft and travel to the ruins, arriving at the tower early in the afternoon. They plan to stay in the ruins for several days and set up camp outside the tower's entrance. Mandarich casts an *invisibility* spell on himself, and the two enter the tower just before nightfall.

After discovering that the zombies were only teleported away, Mandarich (an expert on the Triad) is confident that the creature guarding the tower treasury is a crypt thing. The Osani consider the danger marginal, although they proceed cautiously. Unaware of the creature's immunities, Dylan attempts to "turn" it. His attempt fails, and he is teleported into the city above. Mandarich believed this might happen and postpones his attack against the creature, choosing instead to wait at the camp until Dylan's return.

After being teleported to the surface, Dylan quickly makes his way back to the ruins, arriving there just after midnight. If the PCs have entered the caves ahead of him, he may detect signs of their passing and prepare for them.

The next day, Dylan and Mandarich destroy the crypt thing and successfully plunder the vault. They spend that night resting in the ruins before returning to the surface the next morning.

If Mandarich discovers the PCs in the ruins before Dylan's return, he is surprised but not shocked. He assumes that the PCs are investigating the appearance of the zombies and tries to use the situation to his advantage, He casts his *audible glamer* and *dancing lights* spells in the area of the tower to lure the PCs there. He hopes the PCs can deal

with the crypt thing and possibly defeat the wards on the vault. At the very least, he hopes that some of the PCs may be teleported away, thereby weakening the party for his attack.

A short time after the PCs enter the tower, Mandarich follows them in and casts an *alarm* spell at the halfway point of the entrance tunnel to alert him of the PCs return. He then waits outside for the PCs to trigger the spell, attacking them as they emerge from the entrance.

Should the PCs encounter Dylan and Mandarich after the Osani have defeated the crypt thing (but before the pair have had a chance to rest), Dylan is without his *cure light wounds* spells as well as one of his potions of *healing*, and Mandarich has cast his *hold undead* and *magic missile* spells.

Combat and Tactics

If the PCs confront Dylan and Mandarich in Jevid, the two refuse to fight except in self defense. If it looks as if the PCs are going to be a problem, the Osani are quick to call for the city guard who arrive on the scene in a few minutes and threaten to arrest any troublemakers.

If the PCs encounter the two in the warehouse, caves, or ruins, the Osani attack on sight, attempting to cripple and kill as many PCs as possible. They are utterly ruthless, taking no prisoners.

In the first two rounds of combat, Dylan casts his two *hold person* spells. He then casts *cause fear* and *cause blindness* (in that order) before closing to melee. If reduced to half of his hit points or fewer, Dylan casts *sanctuary* on himself and attempts to heal himself with *cure light wounds* and potions before re-entering the battle. Dylan fights to the death, shouting a curse at the PCs with his dying breath.

Mandarich casts *invisibility* on himself. He follows with a *monster summoning I*, calling forth 2d4 orcs that he sends against the party. He then casts *shield* on himself and *Evard's black tentacles* and *web* on anyone hanging back from the battle. He casts *magic missile* at any PC spellcaster before moving into melee. Mandarich fights until reduced to 4 hp or less before imbibing his potion of *gaseous form* and attempting to escape.

Summoned orcs (2d4): INT average (9); AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 20; XP 15; *MM*/281; studded leather armor, battle axe, spear, dagger.

Time Line

Day 1: Dylan and Mandarich encounter the crypt thing. PCs are attacked by teleported zombie.

Day 2, 10:00 A.M.: Lora attempts to hire the PCs. Dylan and Mandarich consult with Imlik. They remain awake all night researching undead guardians in Imlik's library.

Day 3, 4:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich return to warehouse and sleep in the office. When they wake (in the afternoon), they memorize useful spells, discuss their tactics, and prepare their gear.

Day 4, 10:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich enter the ruins.

2:00 P.M.: Dylan and Mandarich arrive at the tower.

6:00 P.M.: Dylan and Mandarich enter tower and confront the crypt thing. Dylan is teleported away. Mandarich returns to camp.

Day 5, 12:30 A.M.: Dylan returns to camp.

9:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich enter tower, destroy the crypt thing, and plunder vault.

Day 6, 9:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich return to the warehouse, rest and recover spells. Mandarich secretly switches the *wand of polymorphing* with a normal staff, keeping the magical one for himself.

Day 7, 9:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich consult with Imlik. They spend the day at Imlik's appraising and cataloguing the treasures and making a report for their Osani commanders.

7:00 P.M.: Dylan and Mandarich return to the warehouse with the treasure. Distrustful of Imlik, they alternate watches throughout the night.

Day 8, 9:00 A.M.: Dylan and Mandarich leave Jevid.

The Caves

The caves are a series of winding natural tunnels that were completely under water and inhabited by a large tribe of sahuagin long before Jevid was built. The entire complex is cool and very damp.

The tunnels have been reinforced with stout beams by zombie workers. These areas are safe for travel unless the beams are cut or sabotaged. Features of the natural caves include:

x – Roof collapse. When the PCs reach this point, part of the ceiling collapses onto 1–3 randomly chosen characters, inflicting 2d8 hp damage (save vs. paralyzation for half damage). The tunnel is partially blocked but can be cleared out by two men in an hour. Dwarves can roll to detect the unsafe ceiling. Thieves can use their Find Traps ability.

y – Crevasse. The lead PC must make a Dexterity check or step into a shallow crevasse, suffering 1d4 hp damage and severely twisting his ankle. If the wound is not healed magically, the PC's movement rate is halved until he rests for a number of days equal to the points of damage sustained. Dwarves and thieves can roll to detect the unsafe passage.

z – Pit. The tunnel floor suddenly gives way underneath a random PC who must make a successful Dexterity check to keep from falling into a 10' deep pit and suffering 2d4 hp damage from the drop and jagged rocks. Dwarves and thieves can roll to detect the unsafe flooring.

1. Body Storage. PCs become aware of a dry, dusty smell as they approach this cave. Inside are the cadavers of several citizens, all provided by the undertaker, Powlus Quinn. There is nothing of value in this room, but Good-aligned PCs should at least make a note to have these remains returned to the church.

2. Supply Storage. This cave is where the Osani keep their digging tools and other supplies. The cave contains pick axes, shovels, hammers,

The scrags Stike and Meve claim the undercaverns as their own.

nails, and several stacks of sturdy wooden beams. None of the items stored here is magical or particularly valuable

3. Flooded Cave. This cave leads to the ruined city (see below). During high tide, the cave is flooded to a 5' depth. During low tide the waters recede, revealing the opening of another cave entrance.

Ironically, this was one of the first areas the zombies uncovered, but they arrived here at high tide. The Osani thought they had come to a dead end and turned their diggings elsewhere. It was only by chance that Dylan happened to wander back through here at low tide to see the northwestern tunnel.

At high tide, a successful Tracking check reveals many footprints in and around the water's edge. At low tide the water is only 2' deep, and the tracks and northwestern tunnel are obvious.

4. Sahuagin Skeleton. The floor of this cave is 10 feet lower than the floor of the tunnel. At the bottom of this natural pit is the dried and brittle skeleton of a sahuagin priestess. Years ago, this priestess returned to the lair of her ancestors on a holy quest, searching for an ancient temple of Sekolah, goddess of the sahuagin. Unfortunately, her quest ended when she stumbled into this pit, breaking her neck. The bones turn to dust when handled.

The sahuagin's harness has rotted away, leaving only rusty buckles. Next to the sahuagin's bones lie her belongings: a rusted trident, a *dagger +1*, and a "singing bundle" (bits of stone, bone, and shells on a knotted thong and attached to several bone rings). Several of the shells on the rings are pretty and might fetch as much as 1 gp in Jevid, but the bundle is actually a sahuagin "book" containing an accurate and detailed account of the history of her tribe that would be worth several thousand gold pieces to a collector (assuming its true nature is ascertained).

The Ruins

The ruins of the old wharf section beneath Jevid provide an eerie sight. All of the structures in the ruins are covered by a luminescent fungus that glows with a ghostly green light. This light reflects off the water, causing strange shadows to ripple off the cave walls. The light from the fungus is bright enough to illuminate the entire undercity.

The huge cavern ranges in height from 10 to 50 feet and probably would collapse were it not for the lingering magic of the Triad Tower (see area **8**). The buildings range in size from one to two stories in height and are surprisingly intact. Their insides have been stripped bare, the furniture having long since been broken up and used for firewood. Nothing of value can be found in the buildings.

Exploring the Ruins

The mongrelmen become aware of the PCs as soon as they enter the ruins. Word of their coming spreads quickly throughout the entire community. After just a short time, it should become apparent to the PCs that the ruins are inhabited as they stumble across tiny foot prints, trash, gnawed bones, and furtive movements in the shadowy recesses.

As the PCs begin exploring the ruins, they hear the sounds of a struggle followed by garbled cries for help. If they investigate, they come upon Stike, a marine troll, in the process of uncovering the camouflaged home of a terrified mongrelman family. (See "The Trolls" sidebar for Stike's statistics.) If the PCs do not intervene, the scrag pulls the father out, knocks him unconscious, and stuffs him into a sack.

Several mongrelmen led by Stokslot surround Stike from a distance, pelting him with stones in an attempt to distract him. Several giant rats also dart in and out, nipping at the troll's ankles. With Stike's attention turned elsewhere, other mongrelmen help the rest of the family to safety. Irritated but unharmed by the mongrelman assault, Stike returns to the water with his prey.

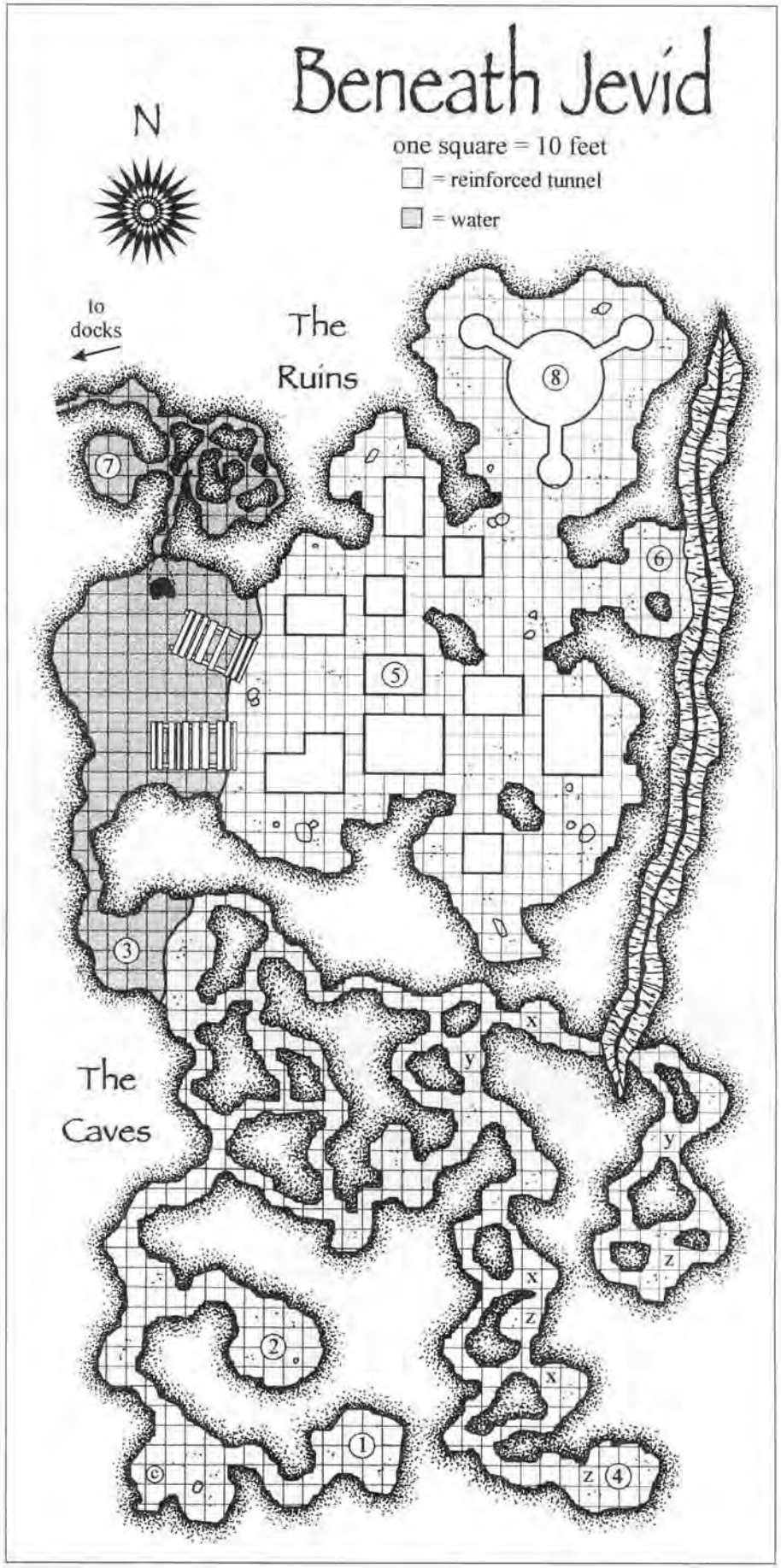
If the PCs attack Stike, the troll is surprised to see them. After one round of combat, he drops the sack and flees into the water.

If the PCs do not investigate the commotion or do nothing to hinder the troll, the mongrelmen avoid them for the rest of the adventure. If the PCs aided the mongrelmen against the troll, they are soon approached by Stokslot and his bodyguards. Speaking in broken Common, he thanks them for their help and explains that for many years his people have been hunted and eaten by the terrible creatures who cannot be hurt or killed (i.e., the scrags).

He invites the PCs back to The Dirty Rill (area **5**) and has them sit at a place of honor in the center of the circle of stones. They are brought cups of water and plates of food (dead rats, cockroaches, fungi, and small fish). Meanwhile, other mongrelmen enter and take seats around the room, gazing at the PCs in awe. Whether the PCs eat their meal or not, Stokslot tries to persuade them to kill the "demons" in exchange for the mongrelmen's treasure, which is stored in area **5**.

Stokslot knows the two trolls live in an undersea cave near the ruined docks, but he doesn't know about the young. The chief answers any other questions the PCs have concerning the ruins or the Osani to the best of his ability. The mongrelmen have observed Dylan, Mandarich, and their zombie servants exploring the ruins and know they spent a lot of time at "the bad place" (the Triad Tower, area **8**). If asked, Stokslot indicates which direction the tower lies but refuses to go there or speak any more about it. He also advises the PCs to stay away from there. Stokslot and the other mongrelmen are fully detailed in "The Mongrelmen" sidebar.

5. The Dirty Rill Tavern. Like the rest of the buildings in Jevid, all wood furnishings have been removed, but dozens of stones have been arranged in rows forming a semicircle around the main fireplace. The Dirty Rill Tavern is where the mongrelmen meet to discuss business concerning the community. It is also where Liira, the tribe's shaman, conducts her services on holy days.



The Mongrelmen

Although the Triad Tower survived the earthquake that devoured the old city, most of its inhabitants did not. However, a group of mongrelmen who were once enslaved by the Triad managed to survive. These unfortunate beings lived in caves beneath the tower. Ironically, they were spared in the quake because of the magic placed on the tower.

After the quake, the mongrelmen eventually worked up the courage to leave their caves. To their surprise, they found that all of the wizards within the tower had been killed, leaving them free to explore the underground city. The mongrelmen banded together and eventually interbred with the few human inhabitants of the city who had also survived. Because of this, many of the mongrelmen, while still bestial, have a strangely human appearance that some might find disquieting

The original survivors of the quake lacked the tools or knowledge to dig themselves free. They found the undersea tunnel (area **7**) but were unable to hold their breath long enough to swim through it. Wisely, they decided to make the best of their situation and, with help from the adaptable nature of the mongrelmen, thrived. Since then, mainly due to their human influence, the mongrelmen have formed their own society, religion, and customs.

There are now over 80 adults (and nearly as many children) living in small family groups in various areas in and around the ruined city. They dwell in small camouflaged caves beneath the ground (not marked on the map). Mongrelman families are guarded by at least one giant rat that is treated as a household pet.

The mongrelmen's diet consists of rats, insects, and the occasional fish (a rare delicacy for those brave enough to approach the water's edge). A natural spring provides them with fresh water. Firewood is too rare to be used for cooking, so all meals are eaten raw.

Male mongrelmen: INT low to average (5–10); AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 65; *MM*/257; bone club, dagger.

Female mongrelmen: INT low to average (5–10); AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as above; SZ M; ML 10; XP 35; *MM*/257; dagger.

Giant rat: INT semi (2); AL N; AC 7; MV 12, swim 6; HD ½; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA cause disease; SZ T; ML 7; XP 15; *MM*/300.

The mongrelmen are led by a chief. The chief's position is hereditary and is currently held by Stokslot, the great, great, great grandson of the leader of the original band of mongrelmen. Stokslot is intelligent, open and honest, but his primary concern is for the safety of his tribe.

Stokslot (mongrelman chief): INT average (10); AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as above; SZ M; ML 14; XP 175; *MM*/257; short sword.

Assisting him and providing for the spiritual welfare of the tribe is Stokslot's wife, Liira. She is a priestess of Payanel, god of suffering and perseverance, a being whom the mongrelmen call K'ssan. While mongrelmen as a race have no true god of their own, years ago, Payanel took pity on these mongrelmen and rewarded his worshipers with spells and healing lore.

Liira (mongrelman priestess): INT average (10); AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as above; SZ M; ML 13; XP 120; *MM*/257; crude holy symbol, bone club.

Memorized spells: 1st—*bless, cure light wounds.*

Over the years, the mongrelmen have a salvaged a small amount of treasure from the ruins. This is hidden in a shallow cave under the floor of the tavern. The hoard consists of 73 gp, 126 sp, 297 cp, a silver comb and brush set (50 gp), three gold bracelets (3 × 30 gp), one gold necklace (50 gp), five gold rings (5 × 15 gp), a gold inlaid broad sword (250 gp), and a slightly tarnished silver *helm of mind shielding*.

6. The Chasm. The chasm is 10–15 feet wide in some places and extends down to an unknown depth. The temperature around the chasm is noticeably warmer.

Realizing that corpses might spread disease, the original survivors of the earthquake gathered the bodies of the dead and cast them into the chasm after a short ceremony.

The mongrelmen believe the chasm is haunted by the spirits of the departed, although it is not (unless the DM deems otherwise). PCs who further explore the chasm find that it descends 80 feet.

7. The Undersea Cave. This undersea cave is part of a complex of winding twisting tunnels that eventually lead to an opening near the docks of Jevid above. The tunnels range in width from 4–6 feet and are totally submerged. PCs entering them must either be strong swimmers or have some magical means of adventuring underwater. The cave contains what little treasure the trolls have accumulated as well as two young trolls—the progeny of Stike and Meve.

Young scrags (2): INT low (5); AL CE; AC 7; MV 9; HD 2; hp 14, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1–4; SD regenerate 3 hp/round in water; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; *MM*/349.

These trolls are just as cruel as their parents. They lie in wait behind the rocks and attack the PCs as soon as they enter the cave.

Hidden under rocks throughout the cave is the trolls' treasure consisting of a coral statue of a shark (worth 135 gp), 10 gems (worth 100 gp, 7 × 50 gp, 2 × 20 gp), an ivory bracelet (worth 125 gp), 163 gp, 340 sp, and 833 cp in assorted coins.

8. The Triad Tower. If Dylan and Mandarich arrived here ahead of the PCs, their camp is located just outside the entrance.

The Triad were a group of evil mages who worshiped a forgotten deity known simply as Entropy. The tower stands ominously apart from its surroundings in several ways. The exterior is formed from solid obsidian, and the luminescent fungus that covers everything else does not grow on the tower walls. The tower is 30 feet tall, and the top butts right up against the huge slab of rock that

serves as the cavern ceiling. A *detect magic* spell cast on the tower causes it to radiate abjuration magic. A successful Mining or Stonemasonry check at –2 reveals that the Tower is the only thing keeping the entire cavern from collapsing.

Before the quake, there were four levels above ground and three levels beneath, including the treasury vault. The quake destroyed the flooring of the upper levels and parts of the lower levels. Now, one can stand in the great hall and gaze straight up to the 40' ceiling of the cavern.

The tower was rocked by the quake, but its exterior walls were heavily warded and withstood the brunt of the damage. Much of the inside, however, was destroyed. All passages and archways are triangular in shape, although the doors themselves are rectangular. The interior walls of the tower are featureless and cut from solid obsidian. The dungeon levels have been carved from natural stone. The rooms and corridors are illuminated with *continual light* spells unless otherwise noted.

Ground Floor

8a. Entrance. The door is unlocked, and the entranceway is charred and burned. Mandarich deliberately triggered the door's magical wards from a safe distance, allowing entry into the tower. PCs may pass through this area without harm.

8b. Great Hall. The floor is littered with large chunks of rubble and debris—the remains of the tower's upper levels. Scattered amid the ruins are several brittle skeletons in tattered rags. More skeletons are buried beneath the debris, one of which wears a *ring of protection +1* on a bony finger. These are the remains of the Triad mages who had gathered here during the first stages of the quake. They were crushed when the upper levels collapsed.

Also hidden by the rubble are two passageways leading away from the hall. Each ends at an intact spiral staircase that was once used to access the upper levels and the roof.

A recently cleared area lies in the center of the hall. Within this area, a wrought iron spiral staircase can be seen winding its way into the ground. Portions of this staircase (which once extended the height of the tower) lie in warped and twisted pieces in the wreckage around the room.

Guarding the staircase are seven zombies armed with footman's picks. They attack anyone not accompanied by Dylan or Mandarich.

Zombies (7): INT non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 13, 12 (×2), 10, 9 (×2), 7; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or 1d8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, death magic, poison, and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; *MM*/373.

Dungeon Level 1

8c. Library. This room contains several tables, desks, and bookshelves. The shelves are bare, the books having turned to dust years ago.

8d. Laboratory. A 6' long obsidian table stands intact in the center of the room. Chained to it is a brittle human skeleton. Bits and pieces of broken bottles and other lab equipment (scales, measuring cups, and so forth) lie scattered about, some of which are usable but fragile; these intact containers suffer a –4 penalty to all item saving throws.

8e. Trine's Quarters. This was once the quarters of the Triad's leader, Keltos Trine. The room contains a broken desk, several chairs that fall apart when handled, a shattered bed frame, and a rickety table. Moldy tapestries hang from the walls. The desk drawers hold broken glassware, bottles of dried ink, and several blank pieces of parchment that crumble to dust when touched.

Set into the south wall across from the entrance is a triangular archway. The archway radiates alteration magic when a *detect magic* is cast. Runes have been inscribed around the arch. A *read magic* or *comprehend languages* spell deciphers them, or they can be translated by a thief making a successful read languages roll. The runes read, *"May the three servants of Entropy, whose names are Chaos, Despair, and Death, reveal the one true way."* If this phrase is recited aloud, the portal glows with a deep crimson light. Anyone stepping through the archway is *teleported* to area **8h**. The gate remains open for

The Trolls

For several generations, life was good for the mongrelmen of Jevid's undercity. They had plenty to eat and drink, and there were no cruel masters to force them into slavery. Their peaceful way of life ended several years ago when a mated couple of sea trolls moved into a cave in the undersea tunnel.

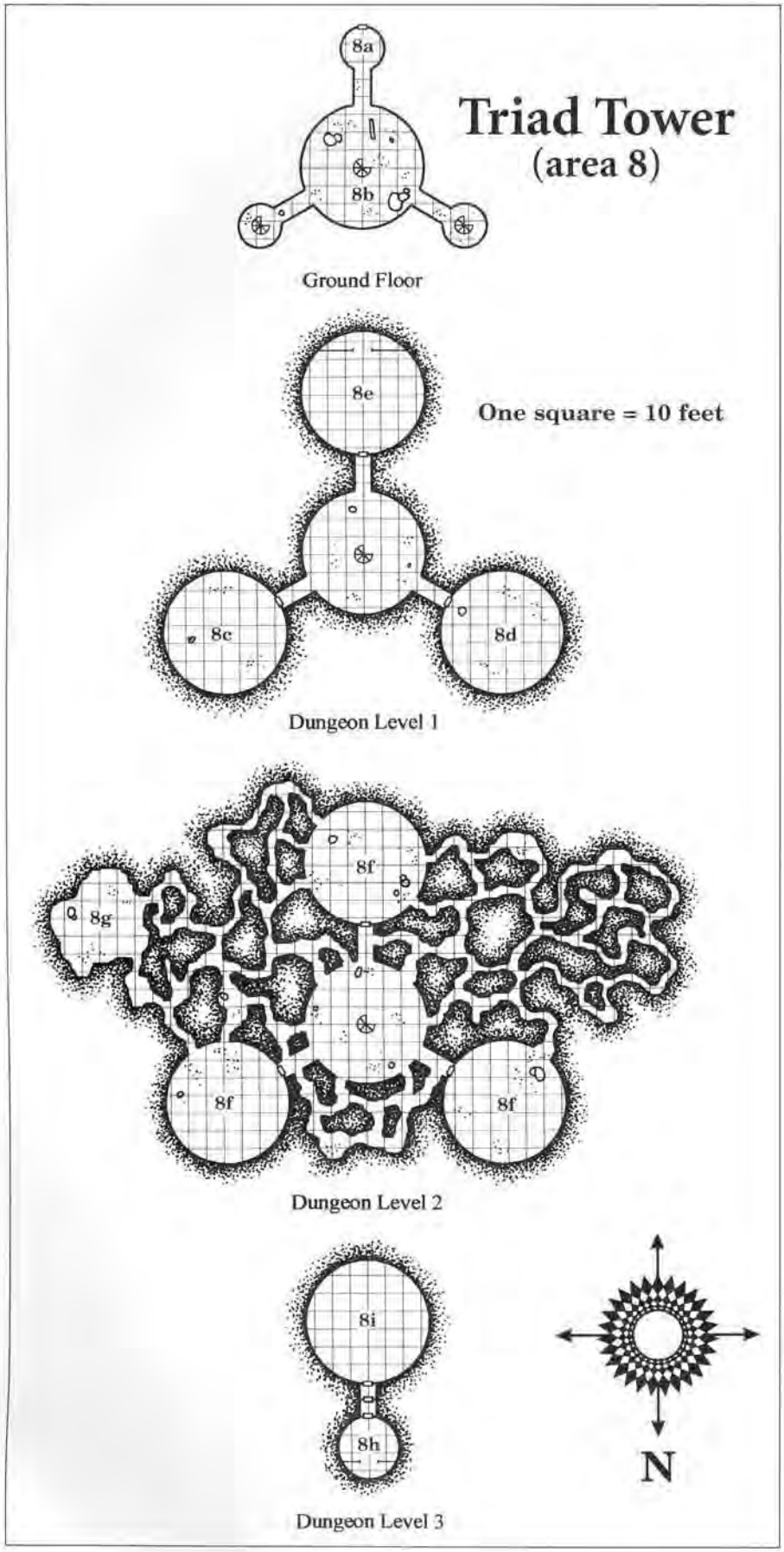
These scrags prey off the mongrelmen and their young. The trolls also help themselves to the occasional human sailor or drunk that happens to walk too close to Jevid's wharf (above), but they limit their hunting of humans and have not yet been discovered. Unfortunately, this means that next to fish, the mongrelmen have become a staple in their diet.

Meve is the bigger and stronger of the two aquatic trolls. She is also smarter than Stike, and he obeys her commands completely. Recently, she picked up the scent of Dylan and Mandarich as they passed through the water into the ruins. Meve has been wary of the appearance of intruders ever since. However, she knows they must kill anyone who enters their domain to keep their easy way of life from being threatened.

If the PCs attacked Stike in the ruins, he returns and discusses the event with Meve. The day after the encounter, both trolls leave their cave (area **7**) and conduct a thorough search of the ruins, killing anyone they find.

Stike (saltwater scrag, male): INT low (5); AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, swim 12; HD 6+12; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/9–16; SA attack multiple opponents; SD regenerate 3 hp/round while immersed in water; SZ L; ML 16; XP 1,400; *MM*/349.

Meve (saltwater scrag, female): INT low (7); AL CE; AC 2; MV 3, swim 12; HD 6+12; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/9–16; SA attack multiple opponents; SD regenerate 3 hp/round while immersed in water; SZ L; ML 16; XP 1,400; *MM*/349.



three rounds at a time, after which the glow dissipates.

PCs making a successful religion proficiency check at –6 recognize Entropy as an ancient evil god. The information on the archway is essential if the PCs hope to bypass the crypt thing without a fight. (See area **8h** for details.)

Dungeon Level 2

8f. Cells. This is where the Triad trapped their enemies and other creatures used in their evil experiments. Each of these 15' high cells contains a few scattered bones (human, animal, and monster) but nothing of value.

8g. Old Mongrelmen Caves. These ancient warrens are where the original band of mongrelmen were forced to dwell. The tunnels range in height from 5 to 8 (1d4+4) feet. The large eastern cave has a 15' high ceiling.

Occupying the eastern cave are the remnants of two prisoners who were slain during the earthquake but later escaped their cells. They now exist as hateful shadows and attack any PCs entering their lair.

There is nothing of value within the shadows' cave or the tunnels.

Shadows (2): INT low (5); AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 17, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SA Strength drain; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; immune to cold-based attacks, *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML special; XP 420; *MM*/312.

Dungeon Level 3

8h. Antechamber. PCs who are *teleported* to this room from area **8e** feel a bit disoriented. Before they have a chance to examine their surroundings, a crypt thing emerges from the shadows and moves to block the southern door.

> You step into a room dimly lit by the red glow of the archway. Directly ahead, you see a recessed door of black obsidian. Standing in front of the door is a skeletal figure with glowing purple eyes and a tattered brown robe.

The crypt thing was created by the Triad using a *create crypt thing* spell (see *MM*/51 for details). This particular crypt thing is stronger than most

of its kind and can use its *teleport* ability 3d4 times per day. Instead of simply vanishing, *teleported* PCs are instantly replaced with a burning smell and small piles of dust, giving the illusion that the PCs have been completely disintegrated.

The crypt thing has been ordered to ask intruders the question, "Who sent you?" The correct answer is, "Chaos, Despair, and Death." (The clue to knowing the correct answer is given in area **8e**.) If the PCs answer correctly, the crypt thing nods and steps aside. It does not speak with the PCs again or help or hinder them in any way unless they leave and return to the antechamber, in which case it asks them the same question.

If the PCs do not answer with the correct pass phrase, the creature says, "I am the lich Horrobond, master of the Triad. Leave this place now or be destroyed!" If the PCs refuse to leave or they attack, the crypt thing raises its bony arms and *teleports* the entire party to a random destination. Most *teleported* PCs end up in Jevid unharmed, but a few might find themselves *teleported* some distance off shore. (PCs are allowed a saving throw vs. spell to remain where they are.) Once the crypt thing exhausts its *teleport* attacks, it fights with its claws until it is destroyed or the PCs retreat through the glowing arch.

This side of the magical archway glows constantly. It is not inscribed with magical runes and requires no pass phrase to activate. PCs stepping through the pulsing, crimson light are instantly returned to area **8e**.

Crypt thing: INT very (12); AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6; hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA *teleport*; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML 18; XP 975; *MM*/51.

"I am the lich Horrobond. Leave now or be destroyed!"

8i. Treasury Vault. The doors to the vault are made of the same rough cut obsidian from which the tower is formed. The doors do not have visible hinges and push silently inward once their traps are disarmed or bypassed.

The first door is *wizard locked* at the 18th level.

The second door contains a complex lock (–20% to Open Locks rolls) that must be picked or unlocked magically. It is trapped, and failure to disarm the trap before opening the door releases a cloud of gas into the small passageway. The gas is a magical concoction that corrodes metal, causing it to immediately fall to pieces. Metal magical items such as weapons, shields, and armor have a chance of being unaffected equal to 20% for each plus; all other metal items are destroyed instantly. The gas fills the passage all the way to area **8h** but disperses after one round.

The third door is decorated with a carved bas-relief of three old crones, each one clutching a staff capped

with a skull. The leftmost skull has two black gems for eyes; the center skull has two smoky white crystals for eyes; and the rightmost skull has two purple gems for eyes. The gems are imbedded in the obsidian door and held in place with *sovereign glue*; they are made of quartz (1 gp each) and have *glassteel* spells cast on them to protect against breakage.

The key to opening the door is to recall the color of the crypt thing's eyes. If the heroes touch both purple gems, the door swings open. If the PCs touch either the black or white gemstones, the door does not open and a trap is triggered.

Any PC touching both black gemstones loses one experience level, no save allowed. A *restoration* spell restores the lost level. Any PC touching both white gemstones is blinded for 2d6+6 turns. The blindness can be removed with a *cure blindness* spell.

The vault itself is unlit. Its treasures rest against the walls and include one suit of silver-inlaid field plate armor and matching shield (worth 3,000 gp), a 4' × 3' gold-framed mirror (worth 1,600 gp), a set of eight bejeweled goblets with matching decanter (worth 1,250 gp), a carved ivory hunting horn (worth 175 gp), a set of gold plates (worth 500 gp), a coral statue of a dolphin (worth 80 gp), a tiny coffer containing five pearls (worth 100 gp each), eight amethysts (worth 25 gp each), and one small ruby (worth 500 gp). Several small chests contain a total of 570 gp, 1,520 ep, and 2,650 sp.

Items of special note include a suit of armor, shield, and helm made from the hide of a green dragon (lightweight and suitable for enchantment; see *MM*/63), several shelves of ruined spellbooks and spell scrolls, a padded belt case containing eight potions (*healing* (×4), *levitation* (×2), *invisibility*, and *growth*) contained in *jars of preserving*, a *brooch of shielding* with 22 charges, a *bastard sword +1*, and a *wand of polymorphing* (16 charges). The command word, "Shavra," is not marked on the wand and must be uncovered through research.

Concluding the Adventure

It is quite possible that Dylan and Mandarich could plunder the tower and be on their way back North before the PCs even discover the existence of the ruins. If this occurs, the DM might want to help the PCs by giving them one last chance to catch the villains before they leave the city.

If the PCs eliminate Dylan and Mandarich, Imlik tries to find out as much as he can about them before reporting to his superiors. For now, the Osani take no direct action against the PCs, but a description of the PCs is circulated among its members, no doubt leading to problems for them in the future.

Imlik is not entirely upset if the PCs disrupt Dylan and Mandarich's plans. He felt the Osani had slighted him by not putting him in charge and might decide to lead an expedition into the ruins. If the PCs remain in the area, Imlik keeps close tabs on their activities. He does not confront the characters unless they try to make trouble for him or his business. If they do, he hires a freelance assassin to kill them.

The pirate ship that was included as part of their payment could also lead to several interesting adventures. The surviving pirates might decide they want their ship back, or the PCs could find a secret compartment in the captain's cabin that holds a map to some uncharted island off the coast.

The PCs might also be faced with a moral dilemma as to what to do about the mongrelmen living in the ruins beneath Jevid. If the PCs reveal the existence of the ruins to town officials, word eventually gets out and the mongrelmen's peaceful way of life is soon shattered. Dozens of cutthroats and treasure-seekers flood the ruins and caves searching for wealth and glory. The mongrelmen are certain to be exploited and possibly even enslaved.

If the PCs keep the existence of the ruins secret, they might be contacted by Stokslot at some later date and asked to help rid them of some monster that has wandered into the caves. The PCs might decide to explore the caves themselves and locate the lost temple of Sekolah. Also, unless the PCs deal with the young trolls living in the undersea cave, they eventually grow up and begin preying on the mongrelmen, much like their parents. Ω

by Aaron Williams

WHO SENT YOU?
UH... LORA THE MERCHANT? GRIFFIN PETROFF?
ZAP
WHO SENT YOU?
POWLUS QUINN?
IMLIK? THE TRIAD MAGES?
ZAP
WHO SENT YOU?
MORDENKAINEN! EL CID! KING ARTHUR! HARPO, CHICO AND ZEPPO!
ZAP
FOR THE TWELFTH TIME, THIS IS GETTING OLD, GUYS!
SHUT UP! WE'LL GUESS THE PASSWORD EVENTUALLY...
AT LEAST WE DIDN'T TELEPORT INTO THE OCEAN THIS TIME
JEVID
7 MILES

DEEP TROUBLE IN TELTHIN

BY JOHN A. HARTSHORNE

Water weirdness

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Diesel

John enjoyed writing this adventure because of its unusual setting. This is John's second appearance in the magazine and his first sojourn to the Inner Planes.

"Deep Trouble in Telthin" is an AD&D® adventure designed for a party of 5–8 characters of levels 10–12 (about 70 total levels). Much of the adventure is set on the Elemental Plane of Water, though PCs are more likely to spend their time within the confines of the home of a water elementalist. The presence of a wizard in the party is necessary.

Removal of magical items from the plane on which they were created causes a reduction in one "plus" for every intervening plane. For example, a *long sword* +2 crafted on the Prime Material Plane becomes +1 on the Ethereal Plane and a +0 magical sword on the Elemental Plane of Water. Because of this, the DM should make sure that the party has at least one or two weapons of +3 enchantment. There are creatures in the adventure that are affected only by weapons of +2 power or greater, so a +4 or greater weapon from the Prime Material Plane is also needed. There is such a weapon in the wizard's complex, though the DM might wish the PCs to possess one of their own. Many of the physical laws of the Prime Material Plane do not hold for the Elemental Plane of Water. These changes are briefly discussed later in the adventure, but the PLANESCAPE® campaign setting and *The Inner Planes* campaign expansion provide additional information if desired.

Adventure Background

Years ago, the Elemental Plane of Water so caught the attention of a wizard named Diehl Kranar that he spent his entire life studying it. He explored its mysteries and finally created a home there, far from the distractions of the Prime Material Plane. As wizards are wont to do, he eventually left his home to search the planes of existence. Because he was familiar with the creatures of the

Elemental Plane of Water, Diehl Kranar was aware of the animosity the plane's inhabitants were likely to bear him. Thus, he constructed many wards and traps in and around his stronghold.

The wizard was quite correct: there were great powers on the Elemental Plane of Water that resented the permanent presence of a mortal in their home. One such power sent its minion, a marid caliph named Issair'shemin, to gain entry to the protected home of the wizard and destroy it, if possible. Issair'shemin discovered that the defenses of the wizard's home were impervious to invasion by elemental-kind. After long consideration, he decided that he needed to find and use mortals to gain entry to the wizard's home.

Demonstrating remarkable patience, the marid waited while his servants searched the plane for non-native travelers. After a long wait, a group of humans was discovered. He contacted them and, feigning friendship, led them to Diehl Kranar's home, claiming that the wizard's stronghold was a resting place for visitors from the Prime Material Plane. Once inside, one of the humans was tricked into breaking the seal that kept the elemental forces from entering. This is what Issair'shemin had been waiting for. When the seal was broken, the elemental caliph stormed into the wizard's home. After slaying the humans who had unwittingly aided him, he waited patiently for Diehl Kranar to return.

Sensing a breach in his home's defenses, the mage returned quickly. The presence of the marid was unexpected, however, and Diehl Kranar was caught unaware. After a brief battle, the wizard was trapped by Issair'shemin in an *iron flask*.

The marid spent the next few days searching the complex. It occurred to him to study the wizard's secrets and increase his personal power rather than to destroy the place as he was bidden by his master. After reading many of the wizard's tomes and learning many of their secrets, Issair'shemin devised a plan to carve out his own kingdom on the Prime Material Plane.

Though Diehl was primarily skilled in elemental magic, he was also adept at planar travel. The marid discovered a grimoire detailing the construction of a permanent *gate* between worlds and decided to create such a *gate* between his home plane and the Prime Material Plane. When opened, such a portal would begin to flood the wizard's homeworld with the infinite supply of water from the Elemental Plane of Water. There, among the presence of mere mortals, the immortal Issair'shemin would rule as a god. He thought that Diehl Kranar's home city (detailed in a personal journal) would provide an excellent location for the Prime Material end of the *gate*. The wizard's home city was already near a lake in a mountain vale, and Issair'shemin suspected that there might be artifacts left behind by the wizard in his home.

Issair'shemin opened the planar *gate* near the wizard's complex, but it was not as large as he had hoped. Water from his home plane poured into the Prime Material, but slowly. The marid caliph decided to wait until a large portion of Diehl Kranar's city had flooded, so he searched the mage's stronghold further. Meanwhile, the people of the Prime Material city, called Telthin, had begun to worry as the water level of their lake rose rapidly. Even though they were experiencing a period of drought, the city streets began to flood. Worse, residents of Telthin observed strange creatures in the lake. Some cityfolk have since been reported missing. Furthermore, the strange absence of Diehl Kranar has led some of the city's council members to suspect the wizard's involvement. Who else but a water wizard would cause such a catastrophe? Surely, the council decided, outside help was needed.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins with the PCs' arrival in Telthin. The city council requests an audience with them shortly after they arrive. The letter sent to the PCs states briefly that the city is being flooded by some magical source, or so the council suspects. Unusual creatures have been sighted in the lake and in the flooded parts of the city. The council is offering a reward of 10,000 gp for a solution to the problem. This amount should be adjusted to fit the campaign. The PCs can easily obtain directions to the Town Hall from anyone they pass in the streets, but the building is just as easily found by walking along the main road. When they arrive at the Hall, the DM should read or paraphrase the following description:

> The city of Telthin is faced with a watery dilemma. Numerous streets in the lower parts of the city near the lake have been overwhelmed by water. Some buildings appear almost completely submerged. As you arrive at the Town Hall, you ponder the cause of such flooding during the current drought. The council members seemed intent on the idea that sorcery was the cause. In lieu of a better explanation, you may not disagree. Then there is the question of the monsters of the water.
>
> The interior of the Town Hall, as yet untouched by the flooding, is well lit and cheery—a stark contrast to the mood on the street. As you enter, a group of six people look up from their discussion around a large table before the fire. The foremost, a slight woman of advancing years, smiles and approaches you.
>
> "Well met, my noble travelers! It is good that you made haste in answering our call. Please, sit with us," she says.
>
> "My name is Marrim, and these are Delph, Agralla, Bertrim, Sydram, and Kyris. You have now seen first hand our plight. The flooding in the city continues unabated. A great number of our citizens camp on the outskirts of our city, but some have decided to leave. In truth, we cannot blame them, for soon there will be no city to inhabit. We have no spellcasters of great power in the city, for the Guild of Wizards here is small. The City of Telthin has been home to but one powerful wizard. This mage, Diehl Kranar, was known as a wise and just man, but he visits the city rarely these days. We suspect that sorcery must be involved in the flooding. The divinations of local priests have revealed only that the flooding is not a natural occurrence.

"We have considered sending someone to investigate the house of Diehl Kranar. He was said to be a water wizard, and this predicament of ours seems tied to him. Our problem is that we fear entering the dwelling of a wizard unbidden. The mages in the Guild have refused, so how can we enter when they will not? There could be mystical traps to snare the unwary. No one here has experience dealing with such things. We were hoping that you can be of aid."

The remainder of the council members keep silent as Marrim looks at you with a hint of desperation in her eyes.

At this time, the PCs may ask questions. The council members are as helpful as possible. The strange flooding began approximately three weeks ago, but it could have been longer and simply not noticed before then. They admit that many of the sightings of creatures are unsubstantiated, but they themselves have seen fish-men, and Bertrim even witnessed a strange column of water rise up to grab a citizen and pull him under the waves. So far, there are eleven people missing, and the council believes the creatures in the water are responsible.

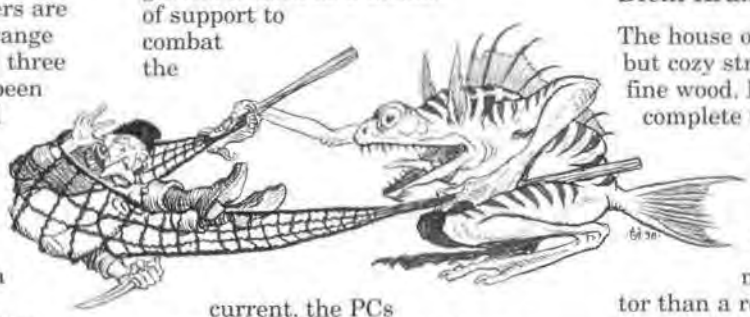
They admit that it is possible these people simply left the city, but those who have truly left of their own accord so far have all been very vocal about their reasons for going.

The council offers the opinion that the source of the water must be in the lake itself, since the only river to feed the lake has not increased its flow. They procure boats and any other standard equipment the PCs wish if they elect to examine and search the lake. The council also provides directions to the house of Diehl Kranar, for they feel that there must be some clue within the home of the wizard.

Investigating the City and Lake

If the party chooses, they may search the city and lake area. To do this, they need boats (easily obtained from the people of Telthin) or *water breathing* magic. The only point of interest in such a search, however, is the *gate* itself at the bottom of the lake. Given proper spells, the party could reach the *gate* and even enter it, passing into the Elemental Plane of Water.

The *gate* has formed in the center of the lake approximately 150' below its surface. There is no way for the PCs to destroy the *gate* from this side, so Issair'shemin is not concerned. It appears as a dark, 3' diameter sphere in the water, just above the lake bed. A steady flow of water pours through the *gate* and can be detected as a strong current. Those approaching the *gate* need some sort of magical power to aid them against the strong current (*gauntlets of swimming*, a *fly* spell, etc.). Even if the ground is used as a means of support to combat the current, the PCs are sucked back through the *gate* once in the Elemental Plane of Water, for there is no such physical support there. The dangerous inhabitants of the lake can be encountered or not, at the DM's option. Through the gate, Issair'shemin has sent two water weirds, a minor water elemental, five tritons, and six sahuagin. The water weirds and elemental keep mainly within the confines of the lake proper to watch the *gate* and keep mortals away from it. The sahuagin and tritons are at odds (something the marid caliph failed to consider) but keep to opposite ends of the lake. The sahuagin have ventured into the flooded city searching for prey. The tritons, if encountered, generally avoid confrontation. They merely await the small portion of Issair'shemin's kingdom that was promised them.



Water weirds (2): INT very (11); AL CE; AC 4; MV swim 12; HD 3+3; hp 21, 18; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA drowning; SD suffers 1 hp damage from piercing/slashing weapons; half or no damage from fire; cold acts as *slow* spell; killed only by *purify water*; SZ L (10'+ long); ML 13; XP 420; *MM*/104.

Water elemental: INT low (5); AL N; AC 2; MV 6, swim 18; HD 8; hp 45; THACO 12; #AT 1; Dmg 5–30; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 2,000; *MM*/100.

Tritons (5): INT high (13); AL N; AC 5; MV swim 15; HD 3; hp 14 each; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; MR 90%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 270; *MM*/347.

Sahuagin (6): INT high (14); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12, swim 24; HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THACO 19; #AT 3 (5) or 1; Dmg 1–2/1–2/1–4 (1–4/1–4) or by weapon; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/306.

Diehl Kranar's House

The house of Diehl Kranar is a small but cozy structure built of stone and fine wood. It is a two-story affair complete with a cellar. The residence is devoid of furniture, and Diehl cannot be bothered to maintain appearances. Some cityfolk regard the wizard more as a mysterious visitor than a resident, as he frequents the city less and less with each passing year. Diehl's reputation as a powerful wizard causes all to give his home a wide berth. A thick layer of dust covers the floor and any other horizontal surface in the house. The upper floor, which consists of three empty rooms, is not shown on the map. The only entrances to the house are the front door and a few shuttered windows, all of which are *wizard locked* (at 25th level).

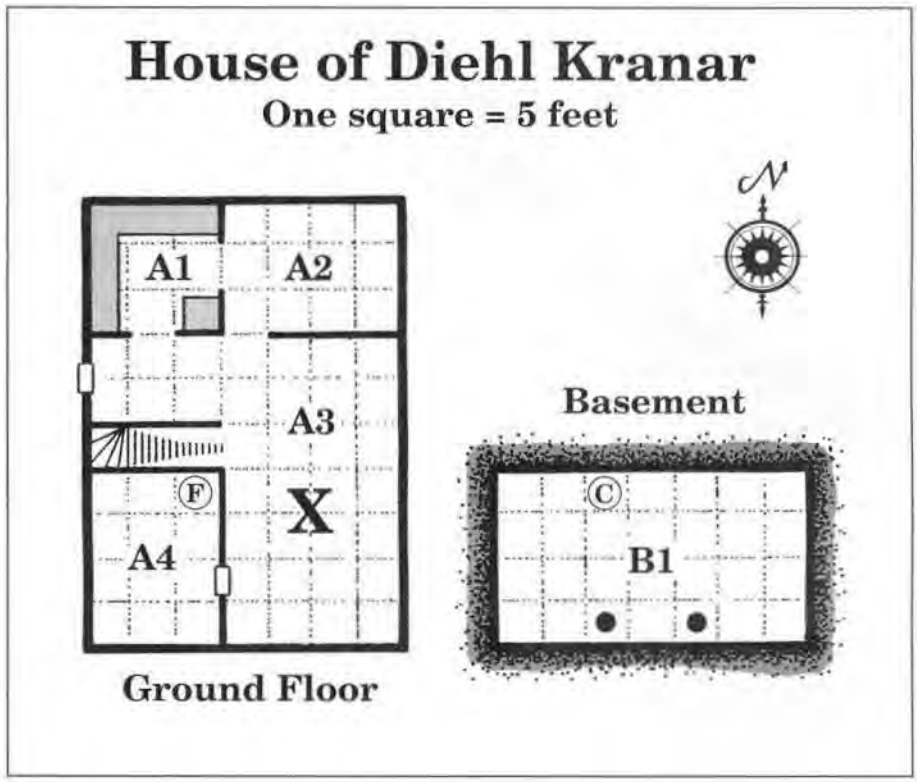
The walls of the house are not magically protected in any way and can be bypassed via *passwall* spells or the like.

A1. Kitchen. There are counters with cabinets and drawers around the room, but all have been cleared of dishes and cooking utensils. Close observation reveals that the mage (or whoever cooked meals) was either extraordinarily clean or the room was used little if at all.

A2. Dining Room. This room is empty and unremarkable.

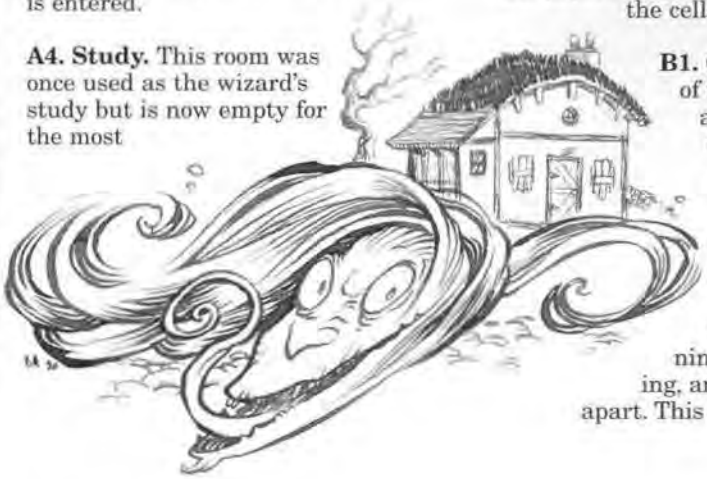
A3. Living Room. As soon as the PCs enter this room, a *programmed illusion* is triggered at the location marked with an **X**. When the party enters, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> The floor begins to crack and gleam with an unearthly light. A rumbling sound begins very faintly but is soon drowned out by a noise that resembles the shrieking of a thousand tortured souls. The sound grows louder until it hurts your ears, and suddenly the floor bursts upward, throwing wood and years of dust into the air. Crouching in the center of the room is a nightmarish creature covered in slime. Its grotesquely thick body heaves as it shifts its massive bulk on its two clawed arms. Beady eyes seem to pierce your soul as the creature lolls a fat tongue between yellowed teeth. "Mortals," it gasps in a deep voice, the stench of ages washing over you as it moves closer. "I have but fifty-two souls to devour before my task here is complete. Come and feed my hunger!"



This is an illusion intended to frighten away intruders. Diehl never intended the creature to engage in combat, so it stares stupidly at the PCs if they choose to attack. The illusion's true nature should become apparent soon thereafter, but because of the quality of the illusion (which includes visual, audial, thermal, and olfactory components), PCs should have a tough time disbelieving the illusion otherwise. The *programmed illusion* is such that it lasts for 10 minutes before fading away, but it replays as many times as the room is entered.

A4. Study. This room was once used as the wizard's study but is now empty for the most part. There is a large pile of papers stacked in the northeast corner of the room, covering a trap door leading to the cellar. These papers are wholly uninteresting and deal with topics from the average rainfall in various regions over fifty years ago to the prices of livestock in the city. Much of these papers are simply duplicates of one another. The PCs discover the trap door in the floor only after moving the pile of papers (a time consuming but not terribly difficult task). Diehl used an *unseen servant* to pile the papers here after descending into the cellar the last time.



B1. Cellar. The cellar of the mage's home is also devoid of furnishings. There is but one item of interest down here: a *gate* to the Elemental Plane of Water. The pillars are 10 feet high, running from floor to ceiling, and stand 10 feet apart. This is visually hidden from the PCs, however, for these pillars have been rendered *invisible*. Because of the proximity of the *gate* created by Issair'shemin, however, the pillars hum slightly. They can be found by using a *detect magic* spell or by simple touch.

The pillars form the gateway to the wizard's complex on the Elemental Plane of Water (area **1**), and this gateway has never been turned off. Any PC who thrusts an arm between the pillars feels a tingling as his arm disappears. The portal is a two-way *gate*, and PCs can pass freely in either direction. This *gate* is a permanent one, and it was constructed by Diehl Kranar to withstand considerable damage. Use of a *wand of negation*, a successful *dispel magic* spell (vs. 25th level magic), or other similar magic renders the portal unusable for one turn. Only items of immense power such as a *rod of cancellation*, a *sphere of annihilation*, or a *wish* can permanently destroy the *gate*. It can be turned off if the proper series of arcane phrases are spoken. These words can be discovered only through extensive magical research and divination, however.

It is hoped that the PCs will not attempt to destroy the *gate* (at least not initially). If they do, they might have a difficult time traveling to the Elemental Plane of Water.

On the Elemental Plane of Water

PCs who bring magical weapons, armor, or protective devices with them to the Elemental Plane of Water discover that items created on the Prime Material Plane are reduced two "pluses" while they remain here (e.g., a suit of *chain mail +3* becomes a suit of *chain mail +1*, while a *sword +2, +4 vs. regenerating creatures* becomes a *sword +0* that is *+2 vs. regenerating creatures*). Spellcasters find that their powers may be altered as well. Fire-related spells work within the confines of the wizard's home, though damaging spells suffer a –2 hp/die penalty (which might simply cancel out the increased damage done to many of the native inhabitants of the Elemental Plane of Water). Air and earth related spells inflict –1 hp damage/die. Spells that summon or contact creatures from planes other than those directly connected to the Elemental Plane of Water fail automatically. Likewise, priests whose deities reside on a plane that is not directly connected to this plane can regain spells only up to fourth level.

The PCs must deal with some changes to the laws of nature when they are on the Elemental Plane of Water. First and foremost is the concept that there is no absolute "down."

The plane of water lacks a single, large physical body of mass to which all things are attracted. Therefore, the concept of gravity is unknown to those existing here. Inhabitants of the Plane of Water often propel themselves with fins or tails or other forms of marine locomotion, but the more intelligent denizens propel themselves simply by redefining their own direction of down. Once a down direction has been specified in one's mind, a being begins sinking in that direction at a rate up to a maximum of 200 feet per round (unless, of course, a solid object is in the way).

The PCs are likely to enter this plane via the *gate* leading to area **1**, so their minds have already incorporated the down direction to be that under their feet. Those who have visited the Inner Planes before understand how to change this perspective, and others can learn quickly. This redirection of down enables PCs to walk on walls and ceilings. However, these are not flat surfaces but rather hemispheres and cylinders; PCs standing on curved surfaces suffer a –2 attack penalty in combat situations, and any Dexterity adjustment to their armor class is ignored. Movement may also be restricted due to the necessary concentration that the PCs must maintain to keep themselves oriented correctly. PCs who are befuddled by the redirectional aspects of the Inner Planes could find themselves "freefalling" down corridors, although a quick change in perception is enough to stop such a fall and avoid taking damage.

Possibly one of the strangest effects of the Inner Planes is that non-sentient objects do not retain any component of velocity once they break contact with a sentient being. Thus, an arrow fired from a bow hangs suspended in mid-air as soon as it leaves the bow (the force that propelled it). Such objects retain their inertia and resume movement as soon as they are touched by a sentient creature. (The arrow would therefore suddenly jump out of the creature's grasp but wouldn't travel far before "stalling" again. Only a creature touching or touched by the arrow's tip would sustain damage.) The exceptions to this rule are magical items and otherwise ordinary items surrounded by magical auras. (An *arrow +3* would function normally, though an *arrow +2* would not, because it was crafted on the Prime Material Plane and rendered nonmagical by the move to the Inner Planes.) Spells such as *flame arrow* or *Nystul's magical aura* that are cast upon nonmagical items give them a magical aura, enabling them to retain their velocity.

Breathing on this plane is not a problem for those who remain in the confines of Diehl Kranar's abode. PCs who wish to go exploring about the watery plane have a whole different group of problems to contend with. (The ability to breathe water or survive underwater is required.) For more information on surviving in this plane, the DM should refer to the PLANESCAPE® boxed set or *The Inner Planes* book.

The Wizard's Elemental Home

The home of Diehl Kranar adjusts itself slightly to the wishes of those inside. The rooms and corridors are constructed using spheres and connecting cylinders. Since there is no "down" in the Elemental Plane of Water, both halves of the spheres of his home can be used. The spheres and cylinders are divided in half (lengthwise), so that a flat "floor" is provided. The floor for the upper half of his domicile is the floor for the lower half as well. The major exception to this form of architecture is the garden (area **11**). The walls of the structure are made of a magically created stone that turns transparent in a 10' radius if desired, but only when touched. This effect allows those within the dwelling to view the watery realm that surrounds them. The wall remains transparent for a period of 10 minutes unless a different period of time is mentally stated. The walls and floor are resistant to all forms of magic. Spells such as *passwall, transmute rock to mud,* and even *disintegrate* prove useless. *Meld into stone, stone spike,* and other spells that do not alter the stone itself or allow passage through it are still effective.

1. Prime Material Gateway.

You pass through the shimmering gate, arriving in the center of a large hemisphere, the apex of

which reaches 20 feet overhead. Ahead of you, the hall—a half cylinder—connects with another hemisphere further on. The walls of the room are formed from smooth, gray stone. Behind you, the gateway to your home seems but a reflective silver surface suspended between two ornate pillars standing 15 feet high.

This room holds the *gate* to the Prime Material Plane, the other end of which is in the cellar of Diehl's home in Telthin. The *gate* itself is suspended between the two pillars. Upon close inspection, it can be seen that these pillars are molded of pure silver to resemble small rivulets of water flowing down them. Under the shimmering light of the *gate*, the water does indeed seem to flow down the pillars toward the floor.

2. First Ward. This 30' diameter hemisphere is warded against the creatures of the elemental planes. A metal triangle inscribed within a circle has been inlaid into the stone floor. The metal is a combination of iron and silver that has had powerful magic interwoven into its making.

To prevent invasion by elemental planar creatures, Diehl enspelled this chamber such that elemental creatures passing through it are struck by a *temporal stasis* spell. This effect can be dispelled if the word *gibrillium* is spoken, although the ward reactivates in 1d4 rounds. This key word can be found in the wizard's desk in area **15**. Non-elemental beings like the PCs can pass through this chamber unhindered.

3. Second Ward. This room is identical to area **2** in all respects.

4. Frozen Wizard. This chamber is identical to area **3**. Just south of the room's southern boundary, however, are the frozen remains of a human mage. The mage belonged to the group that invaded Diehl Kranar's home and broke the seal holding Issair'shemin at bay. The rest of the party was killed almost immediately by the marid, but the wizard escaped this far.

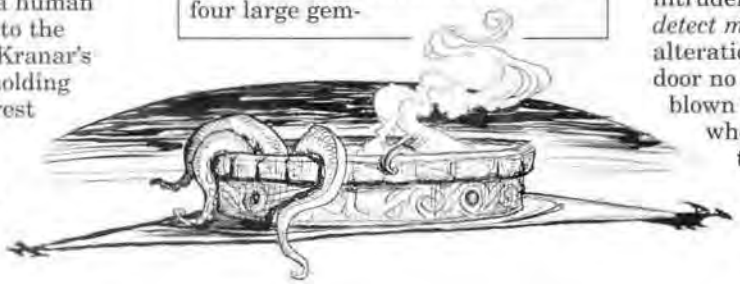
Issair'shemin caught up with the mage here and killed him. If a *speak with dead* spell is cast, the man babbles somewhat incoherently in terror but speaks repeatedly about the water that rose up and flayed his friends alive. If an attempt is made to calm his spirit, he relays the reason that he came here. This includes a quick description of his travel to this plane and befriending a marid (who eventually betrayed him). He also tells the PCs where his friends were killed (area **7**). There is a *dagger +3* at his waist (reduced to +1 here) and a potion of *extra-healing* in a blue crystal vial tucked into his robe. The corpse must be thawed before these items can be removed. Issair'shemin took the wizard's pack, which contained everything else of use.

The mage—named Keffel—can be *raised*. He requires rest and cannot memorize spells because his spell books have been taken by the marid caliph. If restored to life, he is trustworthy, but he puts his own personal safety ahead of the well-being of the PCs (even though he is grateful for their aid). He does not abandon the PCs in time of need, but he does not take unnecessary risks. His primary goal is to depart the Elemental Plane of Water and return to the Prime Material Plane.

Keffel (12th-level human wizard): AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; W12; hp 32; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; S 10, D 16, C 13, I 17, W 14, Ch 15; ML 10; *dagger +3* (+1 here), potion of *extra-healing*.

5. Well of Worlds.

The apex of this hemispherical chamber reaches 20 feet overhead. The walls of the room appear to be formed from smooth, gray stone without seams. This room is well lit by an unseen source. Set into the floor is a stone well approximately eight feet in diameter. Embedded in the well's stone circumference are four large gemstones: a white diamond, a pale opal, a spherical piece of marble, and a light-blue fragment of quartz. The diamond emits a bright light. Surrounding the well is the same inscribed triangle pattern seen in the adjacent room, though the interior of the circle is further inscribed with strange runes.



This is a *well of many worlds* keyed to four specific planes. Diehl Kranar discovered how to regulate to which planes the *well* opened; then he set the *well* in a protective circle. The *well* itself is an 8' diameter black orifice similar to a *portable hole*. Diehl constructed the stone wall around the *well* to house the four gemstones. The plane to which the *well* is opened is determined by which gemstone is pressed. The white diamond (currently activated) opens the *well* to the Elemental Plane of Air. The opal opens a *gate* to the Astral Plane. The swirled marble stone opens a *gate* to the plane of Limbo, while the blue diamond opens a portal to the plane of Arcadia.

The *well of many worlds* is not fixed and can be moved simply by picking it up and carrying it about (though, of course, the stone wall surrounding it cannot be so transported). Once it leaves the confines of its encircling wall and protective circle, however, the plane to which it opens is determined randomly (but still limited to one of the above four). Unprepared PCs might be surprised if the DM determines that a random creature decides to pass through the *well* (probably inadvertently). The protective circle that Diehl placed around the well keeps creatures from entering his home, but they are free to come through the *well* in the absence of such wards.

6. Intersection. The door to this room was normally sealed against intruders, and spellcasters casting *detect magic* can detect the residual alteration magic of a *wizard lock*. The door no longer stands intact but was blown to pieces by Issair'shemin when he chased down and slew the wizard found outside area **4**. The door, which was made of ordinary wood, is now mostly scattered northward among small pools of

water. (The door was blown outward, away from area **6**.)

This chamber is simply a small sphere that acts as an intersection between four cylindrical corridors. At the center of the floor is a small square four feet on a side that is clearly outlined in silver. If a PC stands within the boundaries of the square for one round, the square begins to hum. If the PC remains within the square for an additional round, he is *teleported* to the similar square in area **19** of the level below.

7. Point of Entry.

> This chamber is a full sphere. Two sets of steps lead down to the bottom of the sphere from the hallways. At the base of the stairs is a sight that commands your attention. A man in chain mail armor lies face up on the floor, blank eyes staring at the ceiling. A number of slashes and welts cover his face and arms, and a warhammer lies just out of his reach. Also at the foot of the stairs beside him is a small winch and bucket, suspended over a four-foot diameter hole in the floor. This well is surrounded by an inscribed triangle made of silver set into the stone floor; however, close inspection reveals that one edge of the inscribing circle seems to have been pried out.

This is the room through which the elemental forces of Issair'shemin invaded the dwelling of Diehl Kranar. The marid convinced one of the members of the human party who entered the complex that it would be profitable to take the large amount of silver imbedded in the floor. Before the wizard of the group could stop him, the damage was done. The ward that held out the elemental creatures was broken, and Issair'shemin crossed the boundary into the room. He and his minions killed most of the NPC adventurers immediately, but the mage fled as far as area **4**.

The man on the floor is the only member of the party who was killed within the boundaries of this room. The others were all dragged through the well and are now lost in the vastness of the Elemental Plane of Water. The priest appears to have died from numerous lacerations (from the intensity of the attack by the water elemental that still guards this room), although his lungs are filled with water as well. He wears a suit of *chain mail +3* and lies across his *shield +1* (they are +1 and nonmagical here, respectively). His hammer is a *warhammer +4* that retains a relatively strong dweomer on this plane (+2). If a *speak with dead* spell is used to communicate with the slain priest, he relates what happened to his party. Like Keffel in area **4**, Allyn can be *raised*.

Allyn (13th-level human priest): AL NG; AC 0 (3 here); MV 12; P13; hp 59; THACO 12; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; S 17, D 13, C 14, I 12, W 18, Ch 11; ML 12; no spells memorized; *chain mail +3* (+1 here), *shield +1* (nonmagical here), *warhammer +4* (+2 here).

The only creature in the vicinity is a powerful water elemental that Issair'shemin commanded to guard the "entrance" to the complex. It currently waits outside the complex just below this room (i.e., in the well). The elemental guards against intrusion and attacks the PCs when they enter the room. Although the elemental could easily follow the PCs through Diehl's lair (it would never be more than 60 yards from its element), it does not pursue them past area **6**. The orders given to the elemental by Issair'shemin were explicit, and it fears to disobey him.

Water elemental: INT low (6); AL N; AC 2; MV 6, swim 18; HD 16; hp 96; THACO 7; #AT 1; Dmg 5–30; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; SZ H; ML 17; XP 10,000; *MM*/100.

8. Kitchen. The kitchen is almost as much of a wreck as the dining room. Tables have been overturned, and cooking utensils are scattered about. There is a large metal stove along one wall. This stove magically begins to heat when something is put on its surface. There are six different circular markings around the top of the stove. Each one of these will heat to a different temperature. A metal oven that acts on similar principles stands against another wall.

No food is currently stored here, for Diehl Kranar knew he would be absent for quite some time. A full barrel of drinkable water sits across from the stove and oven. There is a four-foot square teleportation mechanism similar to that in area **6** in the center of the floor. This *teleport* pad takes those PCs standing on it to the storeroom (area **20**) on the level below. The teleporter is one-way only.

Three varrdig elemental grues occupy this room. One is resting on the floor behind a fallen table, one is actually within the water barrel itself, and the third rests on the floor in front of the stove. When the PCs enter the room, they see only the last of the three creatures. It may not be easily identifiable, for it remains motionless until a round after they enter; it appears as a large, translucent, bluish-green blob. Once the party has entered, the varrdig attacks, and the others come out of hiding to attack as well. The varrdigs were given no specific instructions by Issair'shemin and pursue the PCs should they flee the area.

Varrdigs (3): INT low (5); AL NE; AC 6; MV 6, swim 18; HD 6+6; hp 43, 39, 32; THACO 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1–4/1–4 (4–16/4–16 in water); SA drowning; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, immune to water-based spells; SW +1 damage per die from fire attacks; SZ M; ML 14; XP 2,000; *Planescape MC Appendix I*/52 (grue).

9. Dining Hall. This room is a simple collection of two long, oaken tables and 16 chairs. Since the invasion by the elementals, however, the room is in disarray. Both tables have been overturned, and most of the chairs have been broken to pieces. Broken dishware and eating utensils are scattered across the floor. The remains of shattered crystal candelabra and broken white candles can also be found amid the wreckage.

10. Guest Room. This sizable room is exquisitely furnished with oak tables, plush chairs, and a soft bed.

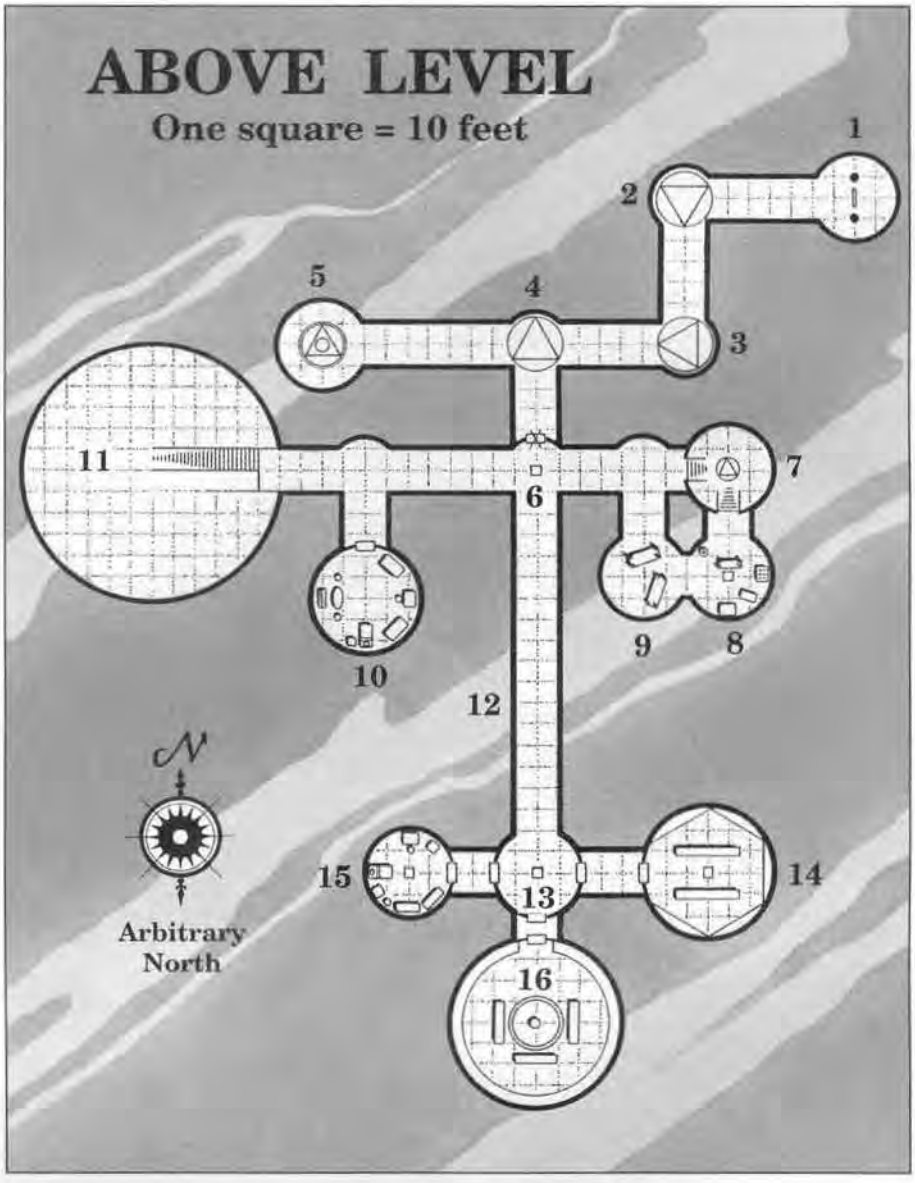
The room is equipped with a sitting area (a low table, a set of intricately carved chairs, and a couch), a large bed and bedside table, and a large oak desk. A waist-high table stands to the left of the desk, and a chest of drawers stands to the right. The wood furniture is highly polished, and the room is well kept thanks to the presence of a *permanent unseen servant* conjured by Diehl Kranar.

11. Garden.

A brightly lit, immense sphere stands before you, steps leading down to the floor 60 feet below. The term "floor," however, might be misleading, for an amazing array of plant life grows across the entire inner surface of the sphere. Stout trees hang overhead, growing downward toward the room's center. In addition to the trees and grass that grow inside the room, there is a wide stream that winds around its interior. There is even a small lake over to one side. Stepping into the room, you see another staircase leading to a point on the sphere above your heads. It is somewhat disorienting, though, for the stairs are upside down. To walk on them would require you to be turned about on your head.

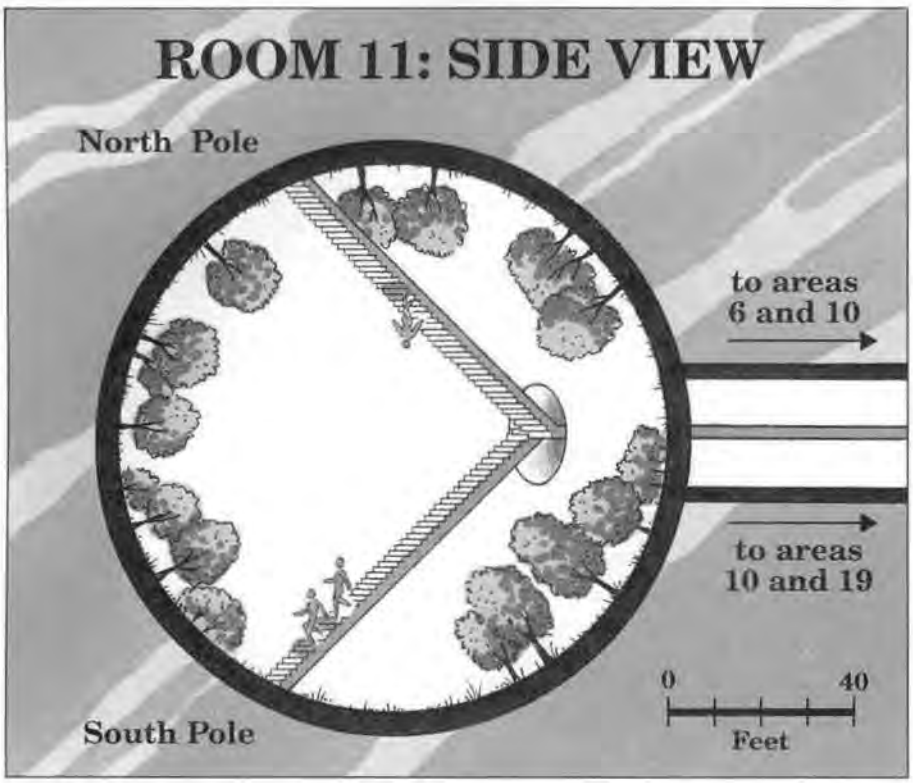
This room is arguably one of the most wondrous rooms in the wizard's complex. Since plant life grows all about the interior surface of the room, it is here that the PCs will most likely learn about the plane's lack of gravity if they have not done so already. The DM should pay close attention to how the players describe their characters' actions. If the party is not already familiar with the disorienting effect of the lack of true gravity, they might be in serious danger. At the DM's discretion, each PC should make a Wisdom check at +2 when they first wander into the room. A failed check indicates that the PC looked above his head at the "ground" above and instinctively oriented the direction above his head as "down." Since each sentient being creates his or her own direction of down, any PC failing this check begins falling in their new "down" direction. This could prove disastrous, for the ground may be as much as 120 feet away (less for PCs on the stairs). The DM might wish to allow the PC an additional Wisdom check (with no bonus) to try to reorient himself and suffer a lesser fall. Kind DMs might also allow desperate characters to shut their eyes and convince themselves that there is no "down." Such PCs remain suspended in mid-air and may be rescued by comrades.

The diagram on page 36 provides a side view of the room. PCs walking from area **6** on the Above Level would enter area **11** and descend the stairs to what could be termed the "South Pole." Those entering the room from the Below Level (as from area **19**) descend the stairs to stand at the "North Pole." The diagram on page 37 provides a map of the surface of the room itself. Much like a map of the earth, the left side of the map joins up to the right side (points **A** and points **B** on the sides of the map correspond to the same location). The circle in the center of this map is the entrance to the room (the hallway that leads back to areas **6** and **19**).



The stairways have been omitted for clarity. The lake is 10' deep at its center, and the streams range from about 1–4' deep. The water is not stagnant but flows magically.

None of the plants found here are dangerous. However, the garden has been invaded by the minions of Issair'shemin. Three water weirds inhabit the waterways of the garden (one at each location marked **C**). The water weirds attack PCs who stray too close to the edge of the stream or the lake. Though PCs have little difficulty crossing the stream (it is neither deep nor swift), it is still deep



enough for a character to drown if held underwater by one of these snakelike creatures.

Water weirds (3): INT very (11); AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 21, 18, 13; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA drowning; SD suffers 1 hp damage from piercing/slashing weapons; half or no damage from fire; cold acts as *slow* spell; killed only by *purify water*; SZ L (10'+ long); ML 13; XP 420; *MM*/104.

The water weirds are not the only problem the PCs must deal with here. The yugoloths that have allied with Issair'shemin are here as well. Two of the three piscoloths are hidden in the woods near the lake (the area marked **D**). The other piscoloth is hidden in the dense foliage near the entrance to the room (the area marked **E**). These creatures are very intelligent and try to gauge the PCs' strength before attacking. They might postpone their attack until the PCs are occupied with the water weirds, for example. They are used to the lack of gravity but use their *teleport without error* power to suddenly engage the party rather than attempt to drop on the PCs from above by changing their down direction.

Piscoloths (3): INT very (12); AL NE; AC –5; MV 6, swim 18; HD 9+18; hp 72, 65, 61; THACO 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2–16/2–16; SA severing, sting, spell-like abilities; SD never surprised; +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to acid, poison, and fire; half damage from gaseous attacks; water attacks inflict –1 hp per die damage; SW suffer double damage from cold-based attacks; MR 40%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 19,000; *Planescape MC Appendix I*/125 (yugoloth, lesser).

The piscoloths may employ the following spell-like abilities at 10th level, once per round: *alter self, animate dead, bind, blink, cause disease, charm person, emotion, improved phantasmal force, jump, know alignment, meld into stone, phantasmal killer* (2/day), *produce flame, protection from good, resist fire, scare, stinking cloud, teleport without error*. They cannot *gate* other yugoloths because the Outer Planes are not connected to the Elemental Plane of Water.

12. Protected Hallway. In this hallway, Diehl Kranar has set a number of traps. These traps can be bypassed by uttering the correct command word (known only by Diehl Kranar). They can be detected by a *find traps* spell, a thief's Find Traps ability, or the like. (The magical traps can be detected by way of a small, nearly undetectable rune on the floor.)

Set into the floor just south of area **6** are 12 quartz gemstones that shine with a lustrous, blue light. These gemstones (worth 100 gp each) have been trapped with a variant of the *trap the soul* spell. Each also has a *sympathy* spell cast upon it that affects anyone approaching within 10 feet. Those within 10 feet of the stones who do not speak the proper command word must save vs. spell or be overcome with a desire to touch the stones. Those who make their save are not compelled to touch one of the stones but may do so anyway. PCs who save against the *sympathy* spell are required to save again only when returning to the area. A PC who touches any of the stones must make another saving throw vs. spell at –4 or become trapped within the touched gem. These PCs can be freed simply by shattering the gems; any gem struck by a blunt object must save vs. crushing blow or shatter. One of the 12 gems is dim, as it houses a hydroloth. If this gem is crushed and the hydroloth freed, it immediately attacks the party. If seriously injured, it uses *dimension door* or *teleport without error* to flee to another area of the complex.

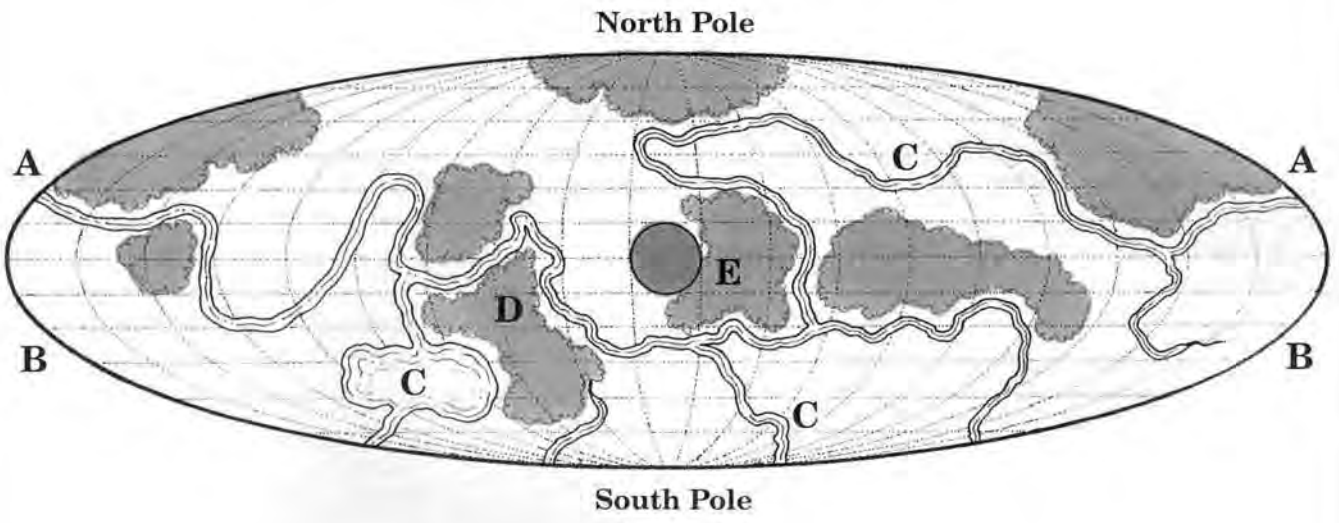
Hydroloth: INT average (8); AL NE; AC –2; MV 6, glide 15 (E), swim 24; HD 7+14; hp 48; THACO 13; #AT 3 or 5; Dmg 1–8/1–8/1–4/1–4/1–10; SA *sleep* attack, spell-like abilities; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to acid, *charm, suggestion,* paralysis, poison, and fire; half damage from gaseous attacks; half or no damage from water attacks; MR 40%; SZ L; ML 13; XP 14,000; *Planescape MC Appendix I*/122 (yugoloth, lesser).

The hydroloth may employ the following spell-like abilities at 10th level, once per round: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, create water, darkness, 15' radius, dimension door, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error, water walk*. Its ability to *gate* other yugoloths does not work on this plane. Due to the shielding of the wizard's home, the hydroloth cannot conjure water elementals.

When one or more PCs reach the center of the hall, a *Mordenkainen's*

ROOM 11: EXPANDED FLOOR VIEW

One square = 10 feet



sword springs into existence. The *sword* attacks intruders for three turns unless they leave the hall. The *sword* has a range of 30 yards and follows intruders to either end of the corridor. The *sword* has THACO 6 and strikes for 5–20 hp damage. It continues to attack for the duration of the spell (30 rounds) or until a *dispel magic* is successfully cast against 30th-level magic. The *sword* can reappear once every six hours.

Characters or creatures entering the portion of hall 20 feet north of area **13** trigger a powerful *ice storm* that affects a 20' radius. This storm causes 6–60 hp damage to anyone within the area of effect, although PCs within five feet of the storm's perimeter receive a saving throw vs. spell for half damage.

13. Intersection. None of the doors exiting this room are locked. A 2'-square *teleport* pad in the center of the room transports those standing upon it to area **22** of the level below.

14. Main Library. The library has bookshelves along the walls, creating five sides of a hexagon. Two tall bookcases were later added to the center of the room. Diehl Kranar soon discovered that he had far too many books even for this large amount of space. He later decided to include shelves along the ceiling as well. The appearance is actually quite odd, for there are books on shelves directly overhead that look as if they should fall to the floor. These ceiling shelves work quite well due to the lack of gravity. Reaching these shelves requires heroes to successfully reorient their gravity. Characters who have not yet mastered the nature of gravity on the Elemental Plane of Water must make a successful Wisdom check at +2 to orient themselves properly.

The majority of the books here contain stories or discussions of extraplanar creatures and events. Diehl has a large section of books chronicling the works of obscure poets, for the mage considered himself a bit of a poet as well. There is a small section dedicated to the study of architecture, a few of which discuss peculiar designs on other planes of existence. Characters spending at least two hours searching through books relating to the Inner Planes gain an understanding of the physical laws that govern these planes (such as the lack of gravity or suspension of inertial force found here). All of the books here are in excellent shape and are undamaged, for Issair'shemin, wishing them to remain unharmed, declared this room off limits to his minions.

A *teleport* pad in the center of the floor (between the two freestanding bookshelves) transports those standing upon it to area **23** of the level below.

15. Diehl Kranar's Bedroom. The door to this room, once *wizard locked*, was blown to pieces by Issair'shemin. Pieces of the door lie strewn about the interior of the room, but nothing inside was damaged by its destruction. The room itself is unlit.

There is a simple yet comfortable bed accompanied by a bedside table at the far end the room. A low chair and reading table sit against the wall to the immediate left of the bed. At the seven o'clock position of the room stands a chest of drawers half-filled with dark blue and white robes and

other pieces of human-sized clothing. To the left of the chest stands a long table, its surface clear of any objects. To the right of the doorway stands an open wardrobe with four hangers. A silken, gray robe lies on the wardrobe's floor.

A large oak desk stands at the northern portion of the room. Unlike the rest of the room, the desk is covered with papers in a terrible state of disarray. The papers on the desk are of no particular use except to those who are interested in studying the Inner Planes. Unlike texts found in the library, these are just collections of notes that describe some of the common occurrences on the various elemental planes. There is a solid gold inkwell with a quill that has a platinum nub (the set is worth 100 gp) on the desk as well. The inkwell has been spilled, and though the ink is mostly dry, it appears to have been spilled less than a week ago. Issair'shemin halfheartedly searched the desk, hoping to find clues about hidden powers in the wizard's complex. He found nothing. Hidden in the desk is a list of command words that enable the speaker to bypass the magical traps in areas **2**, **12**, and **21**. The list is secreted in a false compartment in the leg of the desk (found as a secret door). In the top lefthand drawer is a *ring of water breathing* adorned with fish and other aquatic motifs. Diehl used it for planar exploration, but it serves no use to Issair'shemin, and so it remains.

The *teleport* pad in the center of the floor is not clearly marked like the others in the complex. In fact, there is nothing to indicate its presence. To activate it and gain access to area **24**, one must stand upon it and say "down." This causes the square to illuminate, and the creature speaking is transported after one round.

The elemental lord has been using this room to try to acclimate himself to the life of a human wizard. As a marid, he has no need of rest, but he is convinced that by living as a human he might discover the mysteries of Diehl Kranar's home. This has failed to work so far, but he has yet to give up hope.

16. Laboratory. The door to this large room is *wizard locked* at 30th level and can be opened by using a *knock* spell or a successful *dispel magic*. The perimeter of this room is lined with shelves approximately 10 feet high. These shelves are stocked with all manner of laboratory equipment: beakers, flasks, cylinders, tongs, stirring rods, spatulas, and the like. There is a small brass box filled with 45 magical candles that burn at an extremely high temperature for 30 minutes apiece. These are of little practical value (aside from normal use as candles), but they may be of use to someone such as an alchemist (who would pay 275 gp for the box).

Three bare wooden tables surround a painted white circle and a strange pillar at the center of the room. The pillar is a 20' tall, 5' diameter column of translucent crystal. This crystal, which strongly radiates a magical aura, is surrounded by an icy vapor and houses an imprisoned ice paraelemental. Diehl trapped the creature within to keep cool the center 20' diameter area of the room. There is a nonmagical, 20' diameter white circle drawn around the pillar designating the boundaries of the cold region. Anyone standing just outside the circle feels a slight chill, but nothing of any significance. The air inside the circle becomes colder as one nears the pillar, inflicting 1–4 hp damage to any unprotected character within five feet. Touching the pillar inflicts 2–8 hp cold damage.

The paraelemental can be freed by casting a successful *dispel magic* (vs. 30th level) or a *freedom* spell (reverse of *imprisonment*), or by inflicting 100 hp damage to the crystal column. The freed paraelemental attacks anyone it sees and destroys as much of the surrounding area as possible.

Placed within the white circle are a number of stoppered glass flasks containing volatile liquids, frozen organic tissue samples, and animals parts. The volatile liquids, once removed from the white circle, are treated as *oil of fiery burning* after 1–4 turns. When hurled, they explode for 5–30 hp damage and affect all creatures within 10 feet. There are four of these flasks inside the circle.

Ice paraelemental: INT low (5); AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 12; hp 82; THACO 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3–24; SA cold aura (all creatures within 10 feet suffer 1–4 hp damage per round); SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to cold-based attacks; SW double from fire- and heat-based attacks; SZ L (12' tall); ML 17; XP 11,000; *PLANESCAPE MC Appendix III*/68.

17. Inscribed Triangle. A metal triangle inscribed in a circle has been inlaid into the stone floor. There are no magical wards currently placed upon the circle. Characters may pass through this room without harm.

18. Summoning Chamber.

> This room is dark and smells of soot. The floor is blackened as if scorched by an intense fire. Three charred metal braziers stand about the room's periphery, their bowls filled with gray ashes.

In this room, Diehl Kranar summoned creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire. There is currently no creature bound within the circle (which is covered by soot). If the PCs scrape away the layers of soot on the floor, they discover an inlaid metal circle with an inscribed triangle pattern. Wizards who are familiar with summoning rituals understand the purpose of the room upon viewing the symbol of entrapment.

The braziers are made of brass but are blackened by soot. They are placed atop small inscribed symbols hidden beneath the soot-strewn floor. The braziers are nonmagical and worth 250 gp apiece.

19. Intersection. This junction is identical to area **6**, except that the door leading to area **17** is intact. The *teleport* pad in the center of the floor immediately transports anyone standing on it to area **6**.

20. Storage. This unlit area contains old crates and barrels. The barrels are hermetically sealed and contain fresh water. The crates contain items such as linens for guests and the dining room, spare dishes and silverware, candles, and preserved herbs and spices. Diehl Kranar has not been here for some time and has no foodstuffs currently stored.

21. Protected Hallway. This long corridor is protected very much as the long hallway of the above level

(area **12**). A *Mordenkainen's sword* spell takes effect when the center of the hall is crossed.

Creatures passing through the southern end of the hall, 20 feet from area **22**, are subjected to a *transmute water to dust* spell. While this spell would prove devastating to creatures native to this plane, the PCs are most likely unaffected. Flasks of water, wine, or even potions may be affected by this spell, however. Such effects go unnoticed until the affected flasks or vials are opened.

22. Private Intersection. The hemisphere in this section of the complex is guarded by three hydroloths stationed here by Issair'shemin. They have been instructed to attack all creatures that enter this intersection.

The elemental lord, worried about disobeying the orders given him by his master to destroy the complex, decided that having the yugoloths guard "his" chambers from all creatures would minimize the risk of infiltration by elemental forces not loyal to him. He seeks to escape any form of retribution his master might choose to take, long enough to learn the secrets of this human wizard.

The hydroloths have turned this section of the complex into their own small home. They have used their *create water* ability to completely fill the hemisphere with water and have used a *darkness 15' radius* spell to immerse the area in night.

It is important to remember that the water in the room does not spill forth into the hallway or into rooms as doors are opened. The lack of gravity on this plane results in freestanding water, which remains where it is created (unless moved in some fashion). PCs who approach from the hall are confronted by a wall of dark water.

Attempts to counter the darkness with *light* spells prompts retaliation from the hydroloths with further *darkness*. They are also alerted to the PCs' presence, waiting to see whether the PCs confront them in the water before attacking. One of the three creatures uses its *dimension door* ability to attack from behind once combat is joined.

Any PCs entering the room from area **13** via the transport pad in the center of the floor are in for a surprise. They suddenly find themselves immersed in pitch black water. Anyone suffering this unfortunate fate is subject to drowning, automatically losing one round of breath due to the initial gasp of surprise. PCs entering via *teleportation* are immediately attacked by the hydroloths.

Hydroloths (3): INT average (9); AL NE; AC –2; MV 6, glide 15 (E), swim 24; HD 7+14; hp 57, 51, 44; THACO 13; #AT 3 or 5; Dmg 1–8/1–8/1–4/1–4/1–10; SA *sleep* attack, spell-like abilities; SD magical weapons to hit; immune to acid, *charm, suggestion,* paralysis, poison, and fire; half damage from gaseous attacks; half or no damage from water attacks; MR 40%; SZ L; ML 13; XP 14,000; *PLANESCAPE MC Appendix I*/122.

The hydroloths may employ the following spell-like abilities at 10th level, once per round: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, create water, darkness 15' radius, dimension door, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error, water walk.* Their ability to *gate* other yugoloths does not work on this plane, nor can they conjure water elementals.

The secret door to the south is *wizard locked* at 30th level and is opened (once this spell is bypassed) by pressing a small stone tab on either side of the base of the door. Searching for secret doors while underwater may prove difficult for most characters who are unused to this task.

23. Private Library. This library is constructed almost identically to the one above it (or below it, depending on the perspective).

The books here are similar to those others, although there are exceptions that discuss theoretical aspects of elemental magic, conjuration and summoning magic, and other forms of magic in general. There is an additional set of shelves on the western wall filled with a set of night-blue tomes, all of approximately the same size. All are completely free of markings and are closed (but unlocked) by silver clasps. These are Diehl Kranar's spellbooks that contain all known spells of first- through sixth-level except fire-related or wild magic spells. Though the room is relatively free of dust, there are noticeable streaks in the little amounts of dust present on the shelves near these tomes, indicating their recent use.

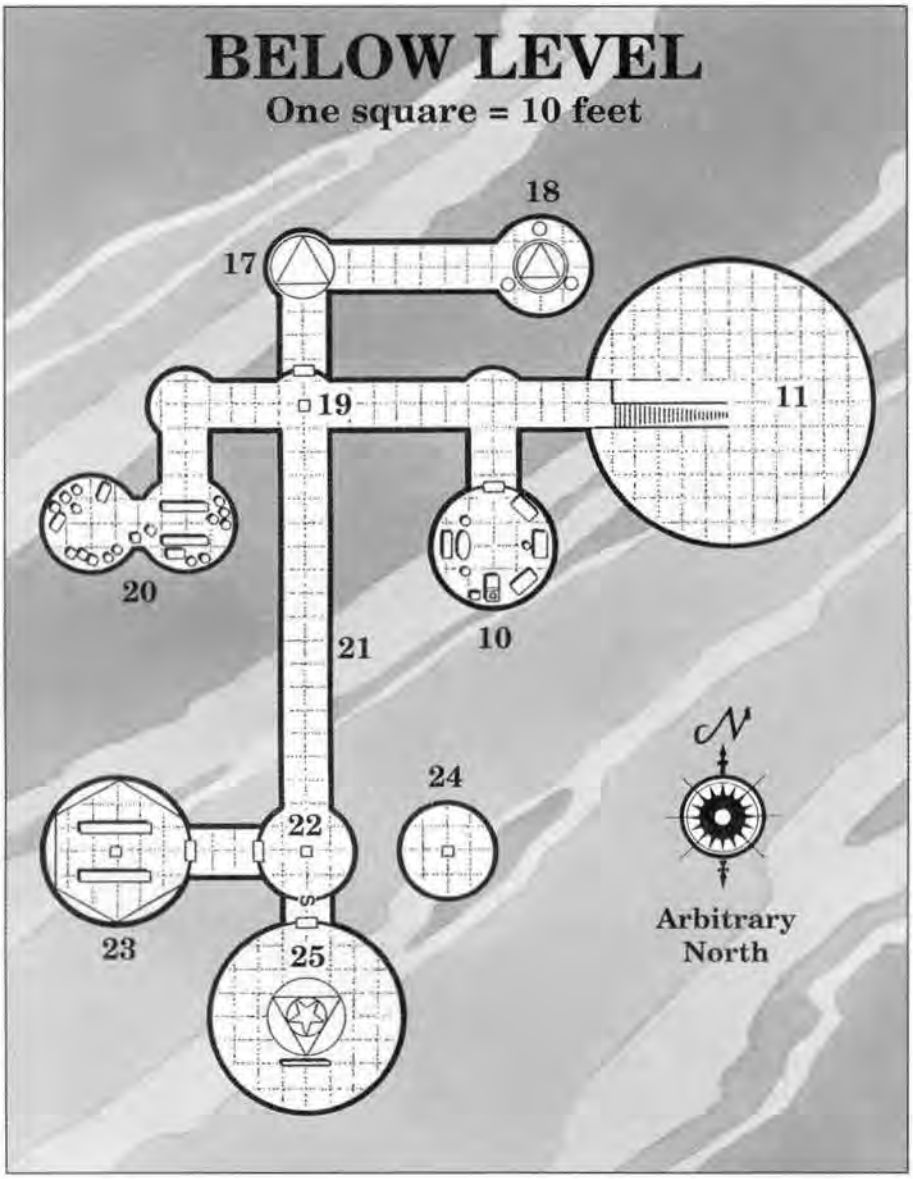
24. Secret Storeroom. This storeroom, which is only accessible via the *teleport* pad in Diehl Kranar's bedroom (area **15**), contains six large chests each measuring 4' × 2' × 2'. All six of these chests are protected by *wizard lock* spells (cast at 30th level) and are airtight. None of the chests are locked by mundane locks, but half are protected by additional traps. The other three chests are empty. As of yet, this room remains undiscovered by Issair'shemin.

The first chest is warded by a variation of a *fire trap* spell. Anyone touching the chest without first speaking the phrase, "I wish to view my spellbooks," suffers 1d4+30 hp cold damage (save for half). Inside the chest are five spellbooks. Spells marked with an asterisk originally appeared in the *Tome of Magic*:

Book One: *acid storm*, banishment, Bigby's grasping hand, control undead, Drawmij's instant summons, duo-dimension, finger of death, forcecage, mass invisibility, monster summoning V, Mordenkainen's sword.*

Book Two: *phase door, power word stun, prismatic spray, sequester, simulacrum, spell turning, statue, vanish, vision.*

Book Three: *Abi-Dalzam's horrid wilting*, airboat*, antipathy-sympathy, Bigby's clenched fist, clone, demand, glassteel, mass charm, maze.*



Book Four: *mind blank, permanency, polymorph any object, prismatic wall, sink, symbol, trap the soul.*

Book Five: *astral spell, crystal brittle, elemental aura*, estate transference*, foresight*, gate, imprisonment, monster summoning VII, Mordenkainen's disjunction, succor, temporal stasis, weird.*

The second chest is protected by a *flesh to stone* spell that affects all creatures touching the chest unless a saving throw vs. petrification is made. This spell causes no harm to elemental creatures, but the gems inside are not likely to interest them in any case. Inside this chest are 982 gems worth 100 gp each as well as 20 fine pearls worth 500 gp each. These gems are the monetary stash of the mage to ensure funds when needed. These gems are all enchanted to return to the chest if removed for more than 24 hours (this effect can be *dispelled* normally). As such, each gem radiates a magical aura.

A *symbol of insanity* protects the third chest, which contains magical items that Diehl Kranar has collected on his journeys through the planes. Inside the chest are six potions of *extra-healing*, a *ring of free action*, a *wand of enemy detection* (25 charges), a *wand of lightning* (58 charges), a blank *Boccob's blessed book*, a pair of *boots of the North*, a *robe of stars*, a *net of ensnarement*, a *trident of submission*, and a sealed bronze *efreeti bottle* containing an insane efreeti who attacks immediately.

Efreeti: INT very (11); AL LE; AC 2; MV 9, fly 24 (B); HD 10; hp 55; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3–24; SA spell-like abilities; SD immune to normal fire-based attacks; magical fire attacks suffer –1 penalties to attack and damage rolls; SZ L (12' tall); ML 16; XP 8,000; *MM*/126.

The efreeti can employ the following spell-like abilities each once/day: *invisibility,* assume *gaseous form, detect magic, enlarge, polymorph self, wall of fire*. He can also *produce flame* and cast *pyrotechnics* at will.

25. Confrontation. The PCs are likely to enter this room only after defeating or circumventing the hydroloths in area **22**. Since the two doors that stand between that room and this one do a good job of sealing out noise, the party's timely arrival surprises Issair'shemin. If the PCs warn Issair'shemin of their coming, the DM should omit reading or instead paraphrase the final paragraph of the following passage:

> The door swings open to reveal a large domed chamber, its apex towering 40 feet overhead. Reflected in the ever-present light found in this complex is the silver and gold trim of a gigantic hazy mirror that dominates the room. The great mirror stands a magnificent 25' tall and is 20' wide. Its dark glass is dimly reflective but does not seem to catch the light of the room as does the silver and gold trim. This intricate network of precious metal shows extremely realistic and lifelike representations of several creatures not native to the Prime Material Plane. Genies, fiends, aasimon, slaadi, and many other exotic beings wind their way around its perimeter.
>
> Inlaid into the floor before this great mirror is a triangle inscribed in a magic circle which is, in turn, inscribed within another circle a full thirty feet across. The silver of this diagram reflects the light of the room almost as brilliantly as does the mirror's trim.

Standing within this diagram is a massive, bulging figure with short, slender arms and impossibly small legs. His back to you, he gazes at the mirror, one claw caressing its smooth surface. He wears a flashy red jacket sewn with starfish and adorned with dangling fish. Holding up his seaweed pantaloons is a thick belt made from the hide of a moray eel. He turns slightly at the sound of your entrance, his rolls of flesh undulating like the sea, and surprise plays across his huge face. After a moment of consideration, he smiles.

The figure before the mirror is Issair'shemin, an elemental lord. He has spent the past few hours experimenting with the large *mirror of truth*, which is Diehl Kranar's most treasured possession (see "New Magical Item" sidebar). Though he has spent a number of days studying the *mirror*, he has not yet discovered how to use it.

The party's appearance startles the marid, but only briefly, and he recovers quickly enough to put on the guise of a friend. He concludes that the PCs must be somewhat powerful, else they would not have won past his elemental and yugoloth guardians. Because their strength is yet unknown to him, Issair'shemin seeks to avoid conflict at first, convincing the wayward heroes that he is a friend of Diehl Kranar's. Unless the PCs attack immediately (and without provocation), the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

"How wonderful! I've not seen a mortal since my good friend, Diehl Kranar, left to search the worlds beyond. I am Caliph Issair'shemin, Lord of the Swift Waters and Bearer of the Trust of Dalphashia. I'm delighted to have such distinguished company. I'm sure it has been a long journey for you—a long journey, indeed—so let us rest and speak of pleasant things. I have grown weary of solitude and would love to hear of your home. It has been many spans of your lives since I have seen your kind."

If the PCs seem to buy into his ruse, Issair'shemin becomes more friendly. He tries to convince the PCs to speak with him, at first to discern which of his servants they might have already overcome. In doing this, he gains an idea of their strengths in battle. If the marid believes that the PCs have not encountered a group of his minions in the complex, he gently goads the PCs into following him to this location. When he finds substantial reinforcements, Issair'shemin turns on the PCs.

If the PCs question the marid more closely, they might discover the deception. His story is credible on the surface, but he had not prepared for this contingency and so might be caught in the lie. Issair'shemin dismisses the presence of lower planar creatures as "standard" guardians used by human wizards. ("Who knows why humans do the things they do? Who can fathom the strange company they keep?"). He denies knowledge of the *gate* to the Prime Material Plane that is flooding the City of Telthin. If questioned about ransacked areas of Diehl Kranar's home or about the dead humans in areas **4** and **7** (especially after claiming not to have seen any humans in a long while), the marid becomes slightly flustered and is unable to provide an explanation. If the ruse is discovered, he wastes no time attacking the party, seeking to gain initiative through surprise. The elemental lord tries to keep opponents at bay using his spells and resorts to melee combat only if forced. He uses area spells such as *ice storm*, *cone of cold*, or *death fog* to affect as many of the PCs as possible. If the battle seems to be going well, he remains throughout the fight. After two or three rounds of combat, if the tide seems to turn against him, he flees. If the passage is clear, he simply redefines his direction of down and "falls" northward out the room. If this is not possible, he opens a huge *dimension door* to escape and summon reinforcements. Issair'shemin is quite aware that, since he is on his home plane, he truly dies if destroyed here. He assumes gaseous or liquid form when reduced to low hit points. He does this only in self preservation and as a last resort, for when he does so, he is unable to take his solid items with him (notably his sword, the *iron flask*, and the items taken from the slain mage in area **4**). If the party defeats him and opens the *iron flask* containing Diehl Kranar, the DM should read the boxed text in "Concluding the Adventure."

The Gateway Between Worlds

The gateway that was magically constructed by Issair'shemin can be seen from the complex. The gateway is below the complex (at least from the point of view of the "above level"). Anyone making the walls transparent (as detailed in "The Wizard's Elemental Home" section)—while on the lower level and looking upward—can see the *gate* clearly enough. Likewise, the *gate* is evident to anyone looking out the hole in the floor of area **7** or anyone looking through the *mirror of truth* in area **25**.

The *gate* itself is a dark sphere three feet in diameter. Unlike the end of the *gate* at the bottom of the lake on the Prime Material Plane, this end is surrounded on four sides by bright-blue gems. The gems form a tetrahedron around the sphere, and each one glows slightly in the dim light of the Elemental Plane of Water.

Closing the *gate* might seem straightforward, but it is slightly more difficult in practice. To close it down, two of the four gems must sustain

Major NPCs

Issair'shemin: Big Fish in a Big Pond

Issair'shemin (marid caliph): INT genius (18); AL CN; AC –4 (–2); MV 9, fly 15 (B), swim 24; HD 15; hp 102; THACO 5; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 2d8+8/2d8+8 (with sword) or 4d8; SA spells, spell-like abilities; SD immune to water attacks; cold attacks inflict –2 hp per die damage (+2 on saves); fire attacks inflict +1 hp per die damage (–1 on saves); MR 30%; SZ H; ML 16; XP 35,000; *MM*/126.

Issair'shemin has the magical abilities of a 16th-level water elementalist as well as innate spell-like powers cast at 26th-level of ability.

Spells memorized: 1st—*magic missile* (×3), *metamorphose liquids**, *shocking grasp*, *wall of fog*; 2nd—*blur*, *darkness 15' radius*, *improved phantasmal force*, *insatiable thirst**, *Melf's acid arrow*, *wizard lock*; 3rd—*dispel magic* (×2), *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, *slow*, *watery double**; 4th—*dimension door*, *ice storm* (×2), *minor globe of invulnerability*, *solid fog*, *wall of ice*; 5th—*cone of cold*, *hold monster* (×2), *telekinesis*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of stone*; 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand*, *chain lighting*, *death fog*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*; 7th—*acid storm**, *forcecage*, *power word stun*; 8th—*Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting**, *symbol*. Spells marked with an asterisk are detailed in the *Tome of Magic*.

Issair'shemin can use the following innate spell-like abilities each 2/day: *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *invisibility*, *liquid form*, *polymorph self*, *purify water*. He may also use the following innate spells 7/day: *gaseous form*, *lower water*, *part water*, *wall of fog*, *water breathing*.

His natural armor class is –2, but he has improved it to –4 with a *ring of protection +2* that he obtained from the human mage in area **4** (it is +4 on the Prime Material Plane). The caliph also carries a scroll of four wizard spells (also taken from the human mage): *improved phantasmal force*, *clairaudience*, *fly*, and *confusion* (all at 12th level). He wields a giant *long sword +3, +4 vs. fire-based creatures* that was created on the Elemental Plane of Water (and so would be reduced to +1/+2 if taken to the Prime Material). The sword can be wielded effectively only by a giant or huge-sized being possessing a Strength of 18/00 or better. The blade was created by magically freezing the densest water found on the plane. The hilt was formed from metals found at the junction of the elemental planes of earth and water, and was then wrapped in the hide of a remorhaz captured on the Paraelemental Plane of Ice. The sword provides its wielder with the cold version of a *flame shield* (2/day) with a duration of 12 rounds. It can also discharge three *ice arrows* (a cold version of *flame arrow*) up to 180 yards away (2/day) and cast *Otiluke's freezing sphere* (1/day) at 15th level of ability. This sword was designed by the elemental powers principally for forays into the other planes.

Issair'shemin also possesses an *iron flask*. This is the item used by the elemental lord to trap the unfortunate wizard. Diehl Kranar has been confined to this magical prison now for days. Though this is somewhat of a short time for a mage of his longevity, he is anxious for release considering the circumstances that placed him there. Issair'shemin knows the command word for the flask, but it is unwritten. The PCs can still open it without the command word. They are simply unable to use the *flask* to command any creature so released. (One hopes they have no desire to force Diehl Kranar into any sort of servitude.) The command word can be discovered only through extensive magical research, for the marid is unwilling to part with this secret.

Diehl Kranar: The Mage in the *Iron Flask*

Diehl Kranar (30th-level human water elementalist): AL CG; AC –3 (1 on Elemental Plane of Water); MV 12; W30; hp 47; THACO 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; SD immune to 1st-level illusions; *stoneskin* spell (deflects 16 attacks); S 6, D 16, C 12, I 19, W 18, Ch 13; ML 16.

Spells (not currently a full complement): 1st—*magic missile* (×3), *metamorphose liquids**, *protection from evil*; 2nd—*continual light*, *detect invisibility*, *insatiable thirst**, *knock*, *mirror image*, *wizard lock*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (×2), *slow*, *water breathing*, *watery double**; 4th—*Evard's black tentacles*, *ice storm*, *improved invisibility*, *polymorph other*, *stoneskin*, *wall of ice*; 5th—*chaos*, *cone of cold* (×2), *teleport*, *wall of force*, *wall of ice*; 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand*, *chain lightning*, *globe of invulnerability*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*; 7th—*acid storm**, *forcecage*, *power word stun*, *teleport without error*; 8th—*Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting**, *power word blind*, *prismatic wall*, *symbol*; 9th—*wish*.

Diehl Kranar wears a white *robe of the arch-magi* and carries a *rod of beguiling*, *ring of protection +6* (+1 to saving throws), *ring of spell turning*, and an *amulet of mind shielding*. In a large *bag of holding* at his side, Diehl carries his traveling spell books and a set of six potions of *extra-healing* in metallic flasks.

This powerful water elementalist is a kind but rather distracted man. He very much believes in the power of the individual. Diehl Kranar makes a powerful and interesting ally, should the party not offend him. Unfortunately, he makes a powerful enemy if crossed. Should the party free him and not do something foolish (such as attack him), Diehl offers the PCs a place to stay. He allows them the run of his complex just so long as they respect his property and do not damage it or attempt to steal anything. As with many wizards, he would travel across many worlds to avenge an insult or right a personal injustice.

It is recommended that Diehl Kranar be used sparingly in a campaign except possibly as a source of information. The *mirror of truth* in his possession is a powerful tool in the gathering of information. The party might call upon his knowledge in times of need, yet they most often find that he is not at home. His primary love remains traveling across the planes and discovering new wonders of the multiverse.

at least 10 hp damage. The gems are effectively AC 8 due to their small size. They are fixed in position and cannot be moved, but they are still relatively fragile. Any weapon that would cause sufficient damage, or any spell producing the same results, destroys a gem. Spells could prove to be the easiest method of destroying the gems, for the current caused by water rushing through the *gate* causes problems for those wishing to employ physical force. Anyone coming within 100 feet of the *gate* is sucked into it. Unless stabilized by a spell or some physical force (such as a rope), any PC getting close enough to a gem to inflict physical damage is drawn through the vortex and into the lake on the Prime Material Plane. A character being pulled into the *gate* has, at the DM's discretion, an opportunity to make one attack on a single gem as it is passed by.

The effects of the water around the *gate* should be obvious to the PCs, because they can see the turbulent flow of water through the *gate*. This strong current is the only challenge to overcome unless the party failed to defeat the water elemental detailed in area **7**. If this creature still remains, the PCs need to contend with it.

Concluding the Adventure

If the party defeats Issair'shemin (whether they destroy him or force him to retreat in watery form), they can probably claim the *iron flask* containing the trapped wizard. If the PCs open the flask, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> As you pull the silver stopper out from the opening of the flask, you nearly drop it as a hiss of air and mist shoots forth. It continues for some time, releasing more air than the flask could possibly hold. Finally, the flow of mist slows and congeals to form a robed man. His handsome features turn harsh as he looks down upon you with flashing eyes. "You! It was you who freed me from my prison? Where, then, is my enemy? I see that much has happened. Tell me now the tale, or does that villain Issair'shemin lurk still in the shadows of my home?"

If freed, the man identifies himself as Diehl Kranar. The above passage assumes that the PCs open the *iron flask* while they are still on the Elemental Plane of Water. If they decide to wait until they return to the Prime Material Plane to free the wizard, he is incensed. Without waiting for an explanation, the wizard transports back to his home to survey any destruction.

If the PCs free Diehl Kranar while they are still in his home, the wizard is extremely grateful. If the PCs explain that Issair'shemin was defeated but still escaped, the mage makes plans to hunt down the marid caliph. In the meantime, however, Diehl Kranar wishes to treat them to a grand feast. If the PCs destroyed the marid, he congratulates their strength and ingenuity. In either case, he tells them that he owes them a great debt, for they saved his home as well as freeing him from his imprisonment.

He explains to the PCs that they may take anything that was owned by Issair'shemin but insists that they leave any items found in his home.

He invites the PCs to stay as his guests and gives them

New Magical Item

Mirror of Truth

The origins of the *mirror of truth* are unknown, though some sages maintain that it was created on the plane of Mechanus (called by some the Plane of Truth) by some Power of knowledge. How it came into the hands of a mortal, even one as skilled in magecraft as Diehl Kranar, is unknown. It is possible that the creator of the *mirror* even now seeks this lost item of power, and that was the reason for the wizard's move to the Elemental Plane of Water. It is also possible that the original creator of the *mirror* is no more, for the names and faces of even the Powers change over time.

The *mirror* is 20' wide and stands 25' tall. Its dark, polished surface is surrounded by an intricate working of gold and silver, wrought into the likenesses of extra-planar beings. It forms an approximate rectangle with its upper corners slightly rounded. Alhough the huge *mirror* is only six inches thick and lacks any visible support at its base, it stands upright and cannot be toppled by simple jarring force. If an extreme amount of force is applied or the area is subject to a great upheaval (such as an *earthquake*), the *mirror* might tip and fall, though it does not break. To use the *mirror*, the user must be a spellcaster or being with innate spellcasting abilities. Any location or being in the known planes can be viewed through the *mirror of truth* with a chance equal to the chance of success of a *teleport* spell (e.g., a roll of 09–96 on 1d100 succeeds if the location is known to the user). Note that locations or creatures that have never been seen can be viewed, though they must be described from legend or hearsay if the attempt is to be made. A failed attempt means that the location or being cannot be viewed for the next 24 hours. The possessor's Intelligence score determines the number of locations or beings that can be viewed in any given day. It can be used only for a maximum time (measured in turns) equal to the possessor's Intelligence. If the being named by the user is dead, the *mirror* shows the image of the being's shade or spirit, even if on another plane. The possessor of the *mirror of truth* can also hear sounds through it (as per *clairaudience*) and can even converse with creatures viewed within. Creatures pictured in the *mirror* cannot see the *mirror*'s user, however.

In addition to the viewing properties of the *mirror*, the possessor can conjure the image of any being in the mirror and force it to answer a series of questions. The conjuring of this image is unlike the previous description. In this case, the being whose image is called forth instantly knows the identity of the mirror's user (though not his or her location). One question may be asked for every five levels of the user. The questions asked may be in the form of a short answer (not merely "yes" or "no"). The DM must determine the accuracy of the being's knowledge of the answer to the question, but if the answer is known, a truthful answer must be given (though the meaning may be twisted).

The *mirror of truth* operates continually under *tongues* and *true seeing* spells such that any being pictured in it can be conversed with and is seen in true form. Likewise, anyone using the *mirror* views locations with the benefit of *infravision* to a maximum range of 200 feet. The mirror can also *detect magic, detect charm, detect invisibility, know alignment,* and *find traps* on any creature or location viewed within its surface, up to five times each per day. The possessor is also immune to the gaze weapon of any creature viewed.

Finally, once per month, the possessor of the *mirror of truth* can rain destruction upon a location viewed by calling an *acid storm*, *earthquake*, or *storm of vengeance* with double the normal duration. After calling down one of these forms of divine retribution, the possessor of the *mirror* is stricken with *weakness* (Strength is reduced to 3) and must have complete rest for a period of one week.

Each time the *mirror* is used for any purpose, there is a 20% chance that the user is overcome by a form of insanity (reduced by 5% per point of Intelligence over 15). If this occurs, the possessor becomes convinced that the being whose image was summoned in the *mirror* (or the inhabitants of the region viewed) are plotting his demise. This belief soon becomes so strong that it consumes the life of the *mirror*'s owner. Gradually, all friends and associates are revealed as "agents" of this being. The destruction of the possessor's nemesis becomes a lifelong quest that never ends, for the owner always believes that his enemy somehow escaped. If the insanity is not somehow cured within two to three years, the *mirror*'s owner eventually takes his own life for fear that he has become possessed by the being around whom his mania centers.

XP Value: 40,000 **GP Value:** 250,000

the run of the dwelling. They may use any room except his private bedroom and storage (areas **15** and **24**). Diehl Kranar first repairs the broken seal in area **7** to keep the elemental creatures from entering again. After this, he begins straightening and repairing the damage done to the interior.

If the PCs have not yet closed the gate by the time they free the water elementalist, Diehl Kranar certainly does so. He is shocked at the news of the flooding of Telthin and seeks to put a stop to it immediately. If the party has already closed the *gate*, the mage again praises them for their capability in a crisis.

As a reward to the party, the mage gives them a portion of his treasure. He insists that they accept a payment of 10,000 gp worth of fine pearls, a *net of ensnarement*, a *trident of submission*, and a *Boccob's blessed book* (taken from area **24**). The DM should adjust this reward as needed to suit the current campaign. He also gives them a magical amulet that, when broken, summons him to their side for a period of one hour. If the amulet is used, he aids the PCs however he may, but he is not under their command or control.

The PCs are free to stay for as long as they wish, or they may return to the Prime Material Plane through the *gate* in area **1** (though they might still have to contend with the ward of area **2**, assuming Diehl hasn't safely removed it). They are free to explore

TSR

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WORLDS OF ADVENTURE

Fast-Play Game

Your portal to the AD&D® game!

by Jeff Grubb

The warrior *shouldered the door open, and it creaked on hinges unused for centuries. The air smelled of damp earth and ancient, unspoken secrets. Ahead of them, a stone-lined hall disappeared into the darkness beyond.*

"Let's go," said the wizard, consulting his map.

"Hold on," said the rogue. "Listen!"

From the hallway ahead came the soft scraping of bone against bone, and out of the darkness stepped a skeleton, the torchlight reflecting off its polished bones. Another skeleton joined it, and then a third. Their lower jaws opened in a voiceless battle cry, and the undead warriors raised their rusted swords and charged the adventurers. . . .

Welcome to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Fast-Play Game. This booklet is an introduction to the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game—the world's most popular roleplaying game. If you're an experienced player who knows all this stuff, share it with someone who hasn't played before. If you're interested in how to play the D&D game, read on.

What Is a Roleplaying Game?

In a roleplaying game, each individual involved pretends to be an imaginary character, much the same as an actor plays a part in a film or a play. The big difference is that in a film, the actors are following a script—but in a roleplaying game, you and the other players are writing your own lines as you play out an adventure, and the ending of the story is not determined until you get there.

One of the individuals in a D&D game is the Dungeon Master (DM for short), the person who knows what the adventure is all about and tells the players what's happening as the story moves along. It's always necessary for someone to be the DM, but this doesn't have to be the same person every time you play. The other individuals are players, each one playing the role of his or her own player character (PC for short). The adventure included with these rules, titled "The Ruined Tower," is for one DM and up to four players.

In the D&D game, player characters are heroic fighters, mighty wizards, and cunning rogues. They journey into lost ruins (the "Dungeons" of the game's title) and battle fierce monsters (sometimes, though not always, "Dragons"). To play "The Ruined Tower," each player picks one of the characters from the sheets on pages 5–6. If you want to play more adventures, you can use this character over and over—you don't have to use a new character every time you play a new game.

The DM should read over all of these rules and the adventure before starting play. The players should read pages 2–4 and look over the character sheets on pages 5–6—but don't read any farther, or the surprises of the adventure will be ruined!

What Are Characters Made Of?

Take a minute to look at the character sheets on pages 5–6. Make photocopies of those pages if you want, cut each of the pages in half, and make sure that every player in your group has the sheet for the character he or she wants to play. Here's what all the information on the character sheets means.

Name: The character's name, already written in.

Player: That's you, the player "running" this character. Put your own name here.

Class: D&D characters fall into general classes. Each class has advantages over the others. The character classes in this adventure include fighters (who are good at fighting with swords and other weapons), wizards (who can't fight with swords but can cast spells), and rogues (who are okay with swords and can also do sneaky stuff like picking locks).

Race: In the D&D game, characters can belong to different races. In this adventure, most of the characters are human. Niles is a halfling, which is a diminutive race of beings who are known for their bravery and cunning.

Level: Characters can be carried over from one adventure to the next (like a "saved game"). As they have more adventures, they become more powerful. Level is a measure of how powerful the characters are. In this adventure, all the characters are level 2, which means they are still fairly inexperienced and can grow more powerful.

Ability Scores: These numbers are the heart of a character's description. They tell what the strong points and weak points of the character are. (Just like real people, most characters are better at some things than others.)

Strength is how strong your character is.

Dexterity is how quick your character is.

Constitution is how healthy your character is.

Intelligence is how smart your character is.

Wisdom is how much common sense your character has.

Charisma is how appealing your character is.

Ability scores range from 3 to 18, with 3 being the lowest (and weakest), and 18 being the best.

Fighters usually have high Strength, rogues have high Dexterity, and wizards have high Intelligence. Your character's ability scores have an effect on how well he or she does at certain things. We've done all the calculations you need to play the adventure, so don't sweat it.

Armor: This line tells you what type of armor your character is wearing.

Armor Class: This number tells you the benefit of the armor your character is wearing. A *low* number for Armor Class is a good thing—a 3 is better than a 4.

Move: This number describes how fast your character moves. All the characters in this adventure move at the same rate, except for Niles the halfling. He's slower than the rest. That's important if the party runs away from danger, since Niles will lag behind.

Hit Points: Hit points are a measure of how much damage your character can withstand. Weapons, monsters, and falling into deep holes can all do damage to your character.

Wounds: This line is used to keep track of the wounds your character has taken. If this number gets to be more than your character's hit points, he or she is defeated and out of the game. Use a pencil to tally your character's wounds, in case some of them get healed. (Elanna has a healing potion that, if drunk, will restore lost hit points.)

Gold: Money in the D&D game is expressed in gold pieces. Everybody starts out with no money, but characters can pick up gold as a treasure or a reward during an adventure. The amount of gold your character collects goes on this line.

XP: Short for eXperience Points, XP is a measure of how successful you are as a fighter, wizard, or rogue. Everyone has a certain amount of XP (the number varies) so that they are 2nd level.

Next Level: This is the amount of XP your character needs to go to the next level. You get XP by defeating monsters and completing quests.

Weapons: This section tells the types of weapons each character has and how much damage each weapon causes. To find out what things like "1d8" and "1d10" mean, see the box in the next column that talks about "Funky Dice."

Spells: Because Thaddeus is a wizard, he has spells he can cast. His spells are listed here. He can cast one *magic missile* and one *sleep* spell during the adventure.

Abilities: Most of the characters have different abilities, depending on their class, race, and ability scores. These are covered here.

Equipment: This is a listing of other important stuff your character may have. Ordinary items like cloaks or boots aren't mentioned, but things that may be useful, like rope and torches, are.

How the Game Works

In the D&D game, the Dungeon Master and the players team up to tell a story. The DM has a script, also called an adventure, that tells what the characters will face in the dungeon. The players have character sheets, which tell them what their characters can do and what items they can use.

The DM sets the stage, usually by reading a

Funky Dice

Weapons (and a lot of other things in the game) come with a set of numbers, like 1d8, 2d6, and 1d4+1. What do the numbers mean?

They describe different types of dice used in the D&D game. The number after the "d" tells you how many sides the die has. A "d6" is the normal kind of die you're probably used to seeing—a cube with each side representing a number from 1 to 6. Other dice come in different shapes and have different numbers of sides: 4, 8, 10, 12, and 20.

A number in front of the "d" tells how many dice should be rolled, so 1d8 means roll one 8-sided die, and 2d4 means roll two 4-sided dice. A plus sign followed by a number means that the number should be added to the roll: "1d8+1" means roll an 8-sided die and add 1 to the result.

Sometimes, you might see a number like 1d3, which doesn't have an actual die for it. Obviously, there is no three-sided die, but you can generate the right number range by rolling a six-sided die and dividing by 2, then rounding up. Thus, a 1 or 2 equals 1, a 3 or 4 equals 2, and a 5 or 6 equals 3.

A lot of games use these dice. If you don't have them, you can get them at a game store or maybe a bookstore, or perhaps you can borrow some from someone. If you can't get them right away, here's how to use 6-sided dice to take the place of all the other sizes. This isn't a perfect solution, however, so you'll want to get your own set pretty soon if you plan to keep playing.

d4 – Roll a 6-sided die; roll over if the result is a 5 or 6.

d6 – Roll a 6-sided die normally.

d8 – Roll one die and add 2 to the result.

d10 – Roll two dice and add them together. If an 11 or 12 comes up, ignore that result and reroll.

d12 – Don't worry about a d12 right now; you won't need one in this adventure.

d20 – Roll three dice (or one die three times) and add them together. Then, add 2 to the result.

prepared bit of text, telling the players what their characters see. This might be a brief description of the area where the characters are, or an old legend being told by the fire, or a passage from a book. The players then can ask questions and tell the DM what they want their characters to do. The DM tells the players what their characters see and hear. Here's an example of how that works:

DM: You see a corked bottle sitting on a shelf.

Player: I pick up the bottle and look to see what's in it.

DM: The bottle is corked, and you can't see through the glass.

Player: I pull the cork out of the bottle.

DM: A black mass of smoke swirls out of the bottle, and from the heart of the smoke a voice thunders, "At last I am free! Now I can conquer the world!"

Player: Uh, is it too late to put the cork back into the bottle?

You get the idea. Sometimes there is some doubt about if a particular action is successful, if you hit an opponent, or how much damage you cause. For that you need the funky dice (see the previous page). Sometimes the players will roll the dice and sometimes the DM will roll the dice, depending on the situation.

Combat

The players are running characters who are going into a dungeon in order to defeat the monsters and take their treasure. The monsters aren't happy about this, and as a result . . . we have combat.

The players roll the dice when their characters are doing things. The DM rolls the dice for the things he controls, like the monsters, or when he wants to keep the results secret from the players. If there's any question about who rolls, the DM decides (making decisions is part of the job). In combat, players always roll for their characters.

When combat starts, each player needs to say what weapon his character is using. Darkblade, for example, may use his long bow or his long sword. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Each of the players needs to make an "attack roll," trying to get a particular number or higher on 1d20 (a 20-sided die). In general, fighters are best at combat and wizards worst, and characters with high Strength do better than weaker ones. Each player gets to roll to see if his or her character scores a hit. In the adventure, we summarize all this and tell you what number each of the characters needs in order to hit. If you miss, there is no penalty, except that the monster is still there and takes a swing at your character in return.

On a hit, your character's weapon causes a certain amount of damage. The long sword, for example, causes 1d8 points of damage to an opponent. The DM keeps track of damage to the monsters—when a monster's wounds are greater than its total hit points, the monster is defeated.

After the characters each get a chance to hit, the DM makes attack rolls for the monsters. Again, we've done the calculations already in the adventure, and we just give you the number required.

If a character is hit, the monster does an amount of damage determined by another die roll. The player marks this damage as wounds on his or her character sheet.

What Is All This Stuff?

The D&D game is set in a fantasy world, a lot like our world back in the Middle Ages. D&D characters use swords instead of guns, ride horses instead of cars, and fight monsters instead of rush-hour traffic. In the game, we throw around a lot of words describing stuff from that age. In case you're not sure what we mean . . .

Swords are good weapons, but not all swords are equal. Niles has a **short sword,** which is best for him because he's not very big. Darkblade has a **long sword,** which is longer and has a better reach. Elanna uses a **two-handed sword,** which causes the most damage of the three.

Daggers are sharp knives, handy for cutting things and stabbing monsters. Daggers can also be thrown to do damage.

A **quarterstaff** is a pole about seven feet long, useful for bashing opponents and testing the ground ahead.

Armor comes in several different styles. **Chain mail** is made of loose links of metal. **Scale mail** is made of overlapping metal sheets. **Leather armor** is more flexible and quieter (and therefore better for rogues to sneak around in), but it doesn't protect as well as chain mail or scale mail. Wizards don't wear armor–it messes up their ability to cast spells.

Thieves' tools are handy to have because sometimes it's easier (and smarter) to open a door by picking a lock instead of bashing it down. A set of tools includes bits of wire, clippers, metal picks, and other small items that a rogue uses to do all sorts of crafty things.

What's Next?

You've got the character sheets, you've got the basic info about how the game is played and how combat works, and now it's time to get into the real action. The person who's going to be the DM should read the rest of this booklet. The rest of you will be players, so don't read any farther. When the DM is ready, you can begin the adventure.

Dungeons&Dragons

Character Sheet

Name: **Darkblade** Player: _____
Class: Fighter Race: Human
Level: 2

Ability Scores

Strength	17
Dexterity	15
Constitution	14
Intelligence	11
Wisdom	13
Charisma	15

Armor: Chain mail
Armor Class: 4
Move: 12
Hit Points: 12
Wounds: _____
Gold: _____
XP: 2000 Next Level: 4000

Weapons:
- Long bow
  - Damage 1d8
- Long sword
  - Damage 1d8

Spells:
Darkblade has no magical spells.

Abilities:
When attacking with his bow, Darkblade makes two attacks each round. He cannot use his bow if he is in close combat.

When attacking with his sword, Darkblade does an additional point of damage. (Roll damage, then add 1 point.)

Equipment:
Torch
50-foot coil of rope
Backpack

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Dungeons&Dragons

Character Sheet

Name: **Elanna** Player: _____
Class: Fighter Race: Human
Level: 2

Ability Scores

Strength	15
Dexterity	17
Constitution	15
Intelligence	13
Wisdom	11
Charisma	16

Armor: Scale mail
Armor Class: 3
Move: 12
Hit Points: 14
Wounds: _____
Gold: _____
XP: 2000 Next Level: 4000

Weapons:
- Two-handed sword
  - Damage 1d10
- Dagger
  - Damage 1d4

Spells:
Elanna has no magical spells.

Abilities:
Elanna has three daggers. She may fight with one of them, or throw up to two per round. She cannot throw her daggers if she is in close combat.

Equipment:
Torch
Potion of Healing: This is a small bottle of liquid that, if drunk, heals 2d6 hit points of damage (or 1d6 points if half is drunk). It will not raise the drinker's hit points above their original level. The potion smells of peppermint.

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Dungeons&Dragons

Character Sheet

Name: **Niles** Player: _____
Class: Rogue Race: Halfling
Level: 2

Ability Scores

Strength	11
Dexterity	18
Constitution	13
Intelligence	12
Wisdom	10
Charisma	12

Armor: Leather
Armor Class: 6
Move: 6
Hit Points: 7
Wounds: _____
Gold: _____
XP: 1250 Next Level: 2500

Weapons:
- Short Sword
  - Damage 1d6
- Dagger
  - Damage 1d4

Spells:
Niles has no magical spells.

Abilities:
Niles has two daggers. He may fight with one of them, or throw up to two per round. He cannot throw his daggers if he is in close combat.

If Niles attacks a humanoid creature from behind, he hits more easily and doubles his damage roll.

Equipment:
Lantern

Thieves' tools: Niles may open a locked door using his tools, and will succeed on a roll of 4 or less on 1d10.

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Dungeons&Dragons

Character Sheet

Name: **Thaddeus** Player: _____
Class: Wizard Race: Human
Level: 2

Ability Scores

Strength	9
Dexterity	12
Constitution	15
Intelligence	18
Wisdom	16
Charisma	13

Armor: None (robes)
Armor Class: 10
Move: 12
Hit Points: 6
Wounds: _____
Gold: _____
XP: 2500 Next Level: 5000

Weapons:
- Quarterstaff
  - Damage 1d6
- Dagger
  - Damage 1d4

Spells:
Thaddeus may cast each of these spells once per day:

Magic missile: This spell automatically hits a creature and inflicts 1d4 +1 points of damage.

Sleep: This spell causes living things to fall into an enchanted sleep. Sleeping creatures are helpless, but can be awakened normally.

Equipment:
Lantern

Magical Scroll: Thaddeus has a scroll with a *knock* spell on it. When he reads the scroll aloud, the spell causes a stuck or locked door to automatically open. The scroll can be read aloud only once; then it disappears.

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The Dungeon Master's Section

This part of the booklet is for the DM, and contains information that the DM should know, but the players should not (like what monsters are lurking behind which doors). If you just want to be a DM, keep on reading. Otherwise, pass these rules back to your DM.

What the DM Does

The Dungeon Master is part director, part storyteller, part central processing unit for the game. The DM is responsible for telling the players what their characters see, telling them what the results of their characters' actions are, and keeping the game moving. The DM runs all the characters and monsters that are not controlled by the players. (That's not as hard as it might seem, because only a few of these characters and monsters are active in the story at any single time.)

This part of the D&D Fast-Play Game is an introduction to being a DM. We walk through a very simple "dungeon" adventure, which you can run for your friends. We cover the basics of combat and movement. There are a lot of numbers and tables in the AD&D game, but we've simplified everything for the adventure you're about to run–we did the calculations so you don't have to.

How do you tell who wins? Well, a roleplaying game is different from a lot of other games because there is no clear "winner." Instead, the characters all grow and improve together, and the players enjoy seeing their characters succeed in one adventure after another. The DM gets his reward by helping that growth, challenging the players as everyone gets together to tell a group story. If you and the players have fun with the game, you're all winners.

What to Tell the Players

Some sections of the text of the adventure are inside boxes. These sections are usually supposed to be read aloud to the players, and are preceded by some line like "If the characters do such-and-such, read the following aloud." This is information that you, the DM, are giving the players–what their characters see and hear.

In addition, the players will have additional questions about what their characters see and experience. You might say, "You see a door," and the players will respond, "What does the door look like?" You check the text of the adventure to see if there's anything special about the door. If there is, you say something like "It's a large oak doors with iron bands." If there isn't, you make something up. This is what the DM is allowed to do. The players won't know if it was in the text or not (well, if you don't get carried away, that is). The DM is in charge of filling in the blanks. We can't cover everything that might happen in the text of the adventure (though we're shooting for the major ones), so the DM is encouraged to provide his own input into the game.

The DM plays the roles of particular characters from time to time. In this adventure there's an old man, the Patriarch, who sends the player characters off to the Ruined Tower, and a monstrous ghoul that shows up later. At times like this, you are asked to act "in character," as if you were the Patriarch or the ghoul. When you're "in character," you might not know certain facts. (For instance, the Patriarch doesn't know what's inside the Ruined Tower, although you, the DM, do.) Playing the parts of these characters is your chance to do a little roleplaying of your own.

Time and Combat

Time in the game is broken down into rounds—like the rounds of a boxing match, only a lot shorter. In a single round, your character can generally do one particular thing: pull a sword from a scabbard, move around a bit, take a swing at a monster, open a door, and so forth. During most of the adventure you don't have to keep close track of time. But there are certain situations, like combat, when time becomes important.

When the characters are fighting monsters, you need to know what everybody is doing at any certain time. Here's how you keep things straight:

- Decide what the monsters you control are going to do: Who are they attacking? How are they attacking? Are they running away?
- Ask each player what his or her character is doing. Usually allow a character to do only one thing at a time. (Some characters can do some things more than once a round–shoot arrows and throw daggers, for example.)
- After all the players have said what their characters are doing, let them execute their actions. (In this adventure, the players always get to try to hit their opponents first.)
- Then execute your monsters' actions.

That's about it. The rest of what you need to know to run the adventure is in the adventure itself. Go for it.

Getting Started

Let's say you're going to be the DM for this evening. It's always a good idea to read through the adventure before you run it, just so you know what's coming. You bring to the table this adventure, either some 6-sided dice or a set of the funky dice (if you have some), some scratch paper, pencils, and some graph paper (if you want–it's not a necessity). If you can, photocopy the character sheets so the players can use them without writing on the originals. It should take about an hour to play this adventure, more if you take your time, less if you speed right along.

You should have between one and four players for this adventure, three or four being the ideal. If you have only one player, let him run two characters–the monsters in this adventure aren't too tough, but they could be too much for just one character to handle. It's good if the players have a chance to read pages 2–4 of this booklet ahead of time, but that's not a necessity. You can fill them in on things as they go along. It will just be easier for them if they already have a handle on the basics.

Once you get settled, here is what you, the DM, say:

> What we're going to do here is tell a story, a story that you're going to help create. Each of you has a character: a fighter, a wizard, or a rogue. The story takes place in a world filled with monsters, treasure, and adventure.
>
> I'm going to be the Dungeon Master, or DM. I'll describe what your characters see, and you're going to tell me what your characters do in response. Do well, and your characters will be rewarded with treasure and increased power. Look at your character sheets and we can run down what the various numbers and items mean.

Give the players a chance to review their character sheets and ask any questions. You should know most of the answers about what the numbers mean from reading the first section of these rules. Ask each of the players to introduce their characters to the rest of the group. For example:

"I've got Niles, a halfling rogue," says one.

"I'm running Darkblade, and he's a fighter, and he's got a bow," says another.

"I'm playing Elanna. She's real strong and has a sword that does lots of damage," says a third.

This would be a good time to explain about the funky dice to the players if they don't already know. Don't worry about when you need to roll them–we'll tell you as the adventure progresses.

Beginning the Adventure

Once the players are comfortable with their characters, read the following aloud.

> All of you are natives of the Vale, a small farming community made up of a number of small towns scattered along a broad, wooded valley. The Patriarch is the spiritual leader of the Vale, and he has asked you to come to his shrine when the noon bell sounds.
>
> The noon bell is just striking as a servant ushers you into the Patriarch's study. The old gray-bearded man is bent with age and wisdom. He motions for you to have a seat.

Now you, the DM, are going to speak in the role of the Patriarch. You can give him an "old man" voice if you want, or just talk normally. There's a little bit of acting involved here, but you don't have to do anything you feel uncomfortable with.

> "I am pleased to see that you have come," says the Patriarch. "The Vale has need for your talents, and your bravery.
>
> "A week ago, some hunters found the ruins of an old tower in the forest. They did not like the looks of it, and quickly moved elsewhere. Now there are stories that something nasty has been raiding farms, and it might come from that tower. I'd like you and your friends to go to the tower and investigate it. Our very safety may depend on your bravery and heroism."

Now comes the players' chance to respond to the old man's request. They may have other questions about the tower and the raids on the nearby farms. Here's what you can tell them (and you can use the "old man" voice to do it, to show that this is the Patriarch speaking, and not the DM).

- No one knew about the tower before. Some hunters found it while chasing a wounded deer. However, long ago there was a powerful magician who lived in this valley. It might have been one of his towers, or his home.
- No one has seen what is raiding the farms. Several sheep have been carried off, and pens have been broken down. This always happens at night. No farmers have been attacked, but they are worried about their flocks.
- Any treasure they find, in the form of money or magical items, may be kept by the player characters. All the Patriarch asks is that any books or other useful items be turned over to him so he can learn more about the history of the Vale (he'll pay, of course).

- He tells the characters that the location of the ruined tower is off the beaten track, but easily found. (No map is provided for the Vale in this adventure, so this map is an imaginary one. It you want to have a map of the Vale to show the players, take a moment to sketch one out.) If no one brings it up, merely say, "The Patriarch unfolds a map and shows you the location of the tower. There should be no problem reaching it."
- The Patriarch does not have any guards or assistants to spare for the expedition. If he did, he would have sent them instead of the adventurers.
- Heroes only have what supplies are on their sheets; there isn't an opportunity for them to get anything else before starting.

The Ruined Tower

Once the players get everything squared away with the Patriarch, the group of heroes (known as "the adventuring party" or simply "the party") heads out toward the ruined tower with orders to investigate it and report back. Read the following to the players:

> The trail to the ruined tower passes through the rolling farmland of the Vale and into the forest. The trees and undergrowth quickly grow dense, and you hear the sounds of small creatures moving through the underbrush. The thick shade of the forest cuts off a lot of the sunlight, and you move through a twilight-colored world of shadows.
>
> Suddenly you come upon a small glade in the heart of the forest. A squat stone tower has been built into the side of the hill at the far side of the glade. The tower has been shattered, and all that remains is a ragged stump of fitted stone. Large blocks of granite litter the clearing, and some of these are covered with thick moss.

The tower is shown on the map on page 10. Use the information from this text and the map to describe the area. Don't show the map to the players–that would tell them too much about what they are going to discover later in the adventure.

Ask each player what his or her character is doing. Most likely their responses will be along the lines of "I am looking at the tower."

The tower is a wreck—it looks like it has been blasted by a bolt of lightning. Originally it might have been 40 feet tall, but now it is a blasted stump that does not extend more than 10 feet high. The tower wall nearest the characters is no more than a low wall a foot high, and can be easily stepped over.

When the first member of the party enters the area of the tower itself, read the following to that player. The other players can listen in.

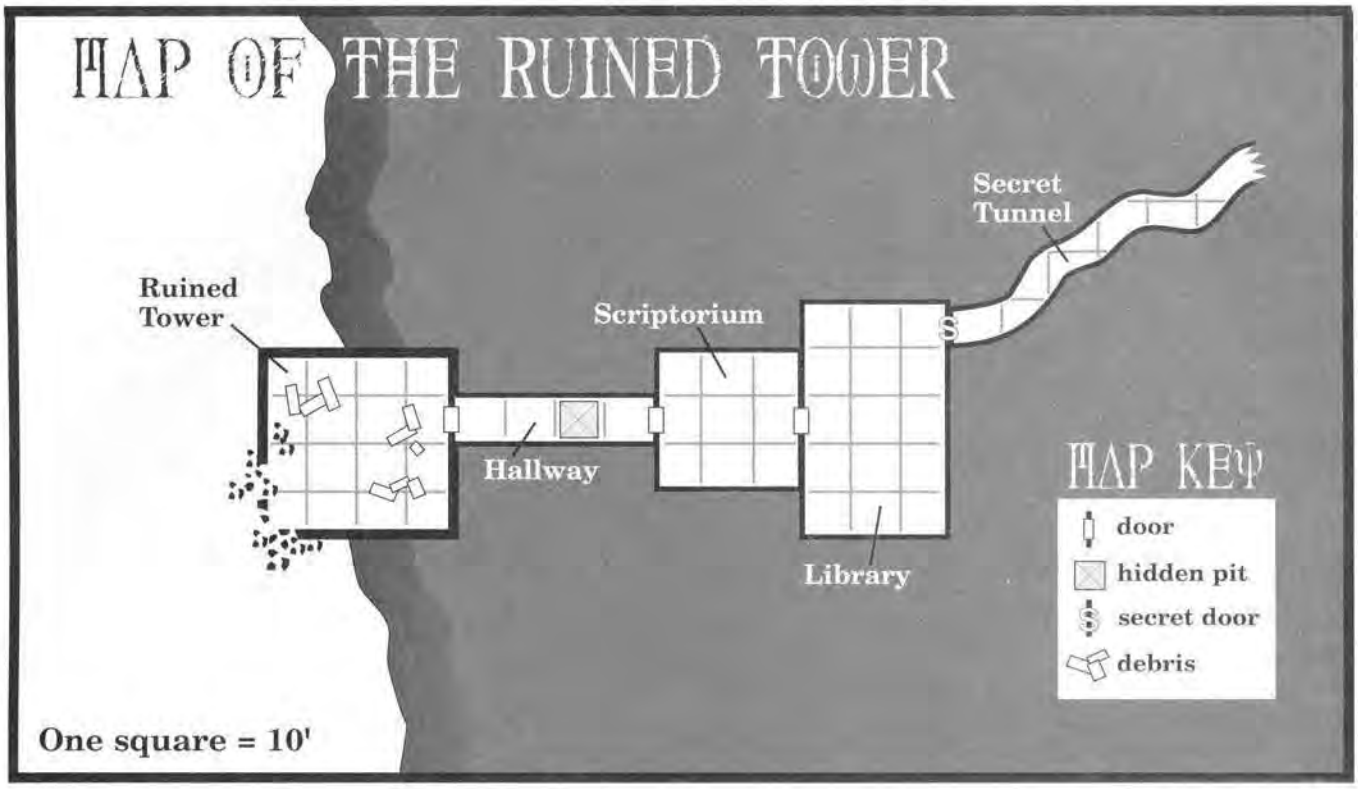
> You step over the wall and see that the inside of the tower is filled with rubble and debris. Dead leaves, shattered stones, and rotted timbers are scattered around the floor. You see, partly buried by fallen timbers, a door on the far wall, leading back under the hillside.
>
> As you notice this, you also see a pile of leaves rustle slightly to your left. A large rat pokes its head out from beneath the debris. It hisses a warning at you, showing long, razor-sharp teeth. It lunges forward, and behind it, three more leap from their hiding places.

There are four giant rats among the debris within the tower, and they are defending their territory. The rats are grayish-brown, about two feet long, and have wicked, sharp teeth and red, feral eyes.

They only attack characters in the tower area, and will not climb over the walls. If there is only one character in the tower area, all four attack him. If there are two characters, two attack each character. If there are three characters in the tower area, two attack the first character who entered, and one attacks each of the others. If there are four characters in the area, then one rat attacks each of them.

Each of the players needs to roll a particular number or higher on 1d20 to successfully attack a giant rat:

- Darkblade needs an 11 or higher to hit. If he hits with his sword, he does 1d8 damage, and then adds 1 point. If he uses his bow, he can attack twice in a single round, even against different rats, and do 1d8 damage on each hit, but he cannot use his bow against rats that are attacking him.
- Elanna needs a 12 or higher to hit. If she uses her two-handed sword, she rolls 1d10 to determine how much damage she does. If she uses her dagger, she rolls 1d4 to determine damage. She can throw her daggers at rats that are not attacking her directly.
- Niles needs a 13 or higher to hit. He causes 1d6 damage if he uses his short sword, and 1d4 if using his dagger. He causes 1d4 damage if he throws a dagger, but can only throw daggers at rats that are not attacking him.
- Thaddeus needs a 13 or higher to hit. He causes 1d6 damage with his quarterstaff. Thaddeus's specialty is not combat, but magic spells. If he casts his *magic missile* spell, he does 1d4+1 points of damage to a rat of his choice (no attack roll



needed). If he casts his *sleep* spell, all the rats immediately fall into an enchanted slumber and are easily defeated.

Each rat starts with 3 hit points. If a character inflicts 3 or more points of damage, the rat is defeated. If a rat takes less than 3 points of damage, note on a piece of scratch paper how much damage the rat took. Subtract that number from 3, and what remains is how many hit points the rat now has.

Any rats not defeated get their chance to attack back. For each rat, you roll 1d20 to try to hit a certain character. The rats are all equally vicious, but they need different numbers to hit the characters because the characters are wearing different types of armor and have different Dexterity scores.

- To hit Darkblade, the rats need a 16 or higher.
- To hit Elanna, the rats need a 17 or higher.
- To hit Niles, the rats need a 13 or higher.
- To hit Thaddeus, the rats need a 10 or higher.

Needless to say, it's better if Thaddeus stays away from the rats. Rats bite for 1d3 points of damage.

A rat attacks a chosen character until that character leaves the area of the tower or is reduced to 0 hit points; then the rat chooses a new target from the remaining characters. If all the characters are reduced to 0 hit points, or if they leave the tower area, the rats burrow under the debris and flee.

It's likely that the characters will defeat the rats with minimum damage to themselves. Any damage that was taken by the characters remains until the characters go back to the town or someone uses Elanna's potion of healing to restore lost hit points.

Defeating the rats gains experience points (XP) for the surviving characters. The rats are worth 15 XP each, so four of them are worth 60 points. That means if a single character stayed in the tower area and defeated all the rats, he gets all 60 points. If two characters defeated two rats apiece, each surviving character gets 30 XP. If three characters took part in the combat, each survivor gets 20 XP, and if all four characters helped (even if some were defeated by the rats), each survivor gets 15 XP. Have the players mark the XP earned on their character sheets. Each sheet tells how many experience points that character needs to advance to the next level. (Obviously, no one will get there very fast just by defeating rats.)

There is no treasure among the debris, but if the players want their characters to look, let them do so. When they decide to move on, they should want to investigate the door partly hidden by the

fallen timbers, which can be easily moved aside.

The door is a heavy oak door, with a lock that's rusted out and useless. However, the door is swollen in its frame and badly weathered, and the characters will have to use brute strength to open it. Let the players choose which character will open the door (it makes sense to give this job to the character with the highest Strength score), and have that player roll 1d20 to determine if he succeeds. In this case, a low result is better than a high result, which means:

- Darkblade needs a 10 or less to open the door.
- Elanna needs an 8 or less to open the door.
- Niles needs a 6 or less to open the door.
- Thaddeus needs a 5 or less to open the door.

Any character can try to open the door as many times as he or she wants. There is no penalty for failing–it just takes a while longer to get the door open. Also, Thaddeus may use the *knock* spell on his scroll to open the door. The door opens immediately if he does this, but as Thaddeus reads the spell, the words on the scroll fade from the paper and the spell cannot be cast again. (Make sure the player who's running Thaddeus understands this before the scroll is used.)

When the characters open the door, go to the next section.

The Hallway and the Pit

To start this section of the adventure, read the following paragraph to the players:

> You force the door open, and a puff of damp, musty air billows out of the doorway. The dust settles, and you are looking down a long corridor leading back into the hillside. The walls and floor are made of finished stone, and are stained from water damage. The ceiling is supported by heavy oak beams. The corridor disappears into darkness about 20 feet away.

Now would be a good time for the party members to think about lighting their torches or lanterns. It only takes one torch or lantern to throw enough light to see by—but note that anyone who is carrying a lit torch or lantern has to use one hand to do so, so weapons like bows or the two-handed sword cannot be used. A lantern can be set down easily if someone suddenly needs to use both hands, but a torch goes out if it's laid on the floor. If the party heads down the corridor in darkness, tell the players that it's getting harder and harder to see . . .

This is part of roleplaying. You and the players consider the imaginary world as if it were a real one, so little things like what you're carrying in your hands or who's opening the door are sometimes important. Don't get bogged down in the details, but just keep an eye on what is going on and where.

When at least one character lights a torch or lantern, add the following information:

> You see that a 10-foot-wide corridor continues into the hillside. The walls and floor have been heavily damaged by water, and the flagstones of the floor are pitched up in places from uneven settling. About 40 feet away, you see a door. There seems to be something written on the door, but you're too far away to make out what it says. What are you going to do?

Ask the players in what order their characters are moving down the corridor. (There's enough room in a 10-foot-wide area for two characters to walk or run side by side. This makes it easy for them to fight without bashing on each other.) One way to arrange the group is to put the well-armored, strong types in front to protect the guys with the lower hit points in the back. If the characters are afraid of being hit from behind, they may put a fighter in the front and one in the back.

The corridor is treacherous and uneven, and has been damaged by water seeping through the ancient walls. About 20 feet from the door, the

A Map for the Players

The players may choose to start making their own map of the dungeon at some point. A map is often helpful because it's a reminder of how rooms fit together, where things are located, and where the exits are in case of emergency. (Remember, the players don't get to see the map we've provided for you.) If the players bring up the idea of making their own map, and you want to let them give it a try, here's how to do it.

Give them a piece of regular graph paper (four squares to the inch will do nicely), and have each square represent 10 feet. You then describe the room or area based on the text and the map we've provided. For example, there are different ways to describe a corridor, such as:

"The corridor runs ahead of you 40 feet and ends in a door. The corridor is 10 feet wide."

"The corridor runs east 40 feet to a door on the far end. You are at the west end of the corridor."

Or, if you want to be sure the players understand where they are, you can simply make a sketch on the graph paper and let them look at it. As their characters move into a different area, add another piece of information to their map, according to what the characters would see, so that step by step it starts to resemble the map you're using.

ground is so badly eroded that any pressure on the floor will cause the floor to collapse. On your map, that place is marked by the big symbol for a pit. (This is one reason you don't show the players the DM's map—you want this place to be a secret until the characters get there.)

If the characters merrily march down the corridor, heading for the door, the characters in front fall into the pit that suddenly appears before them as the floor disintegrates. Read the following aloud if this happens:

> You walk down the corridor. About halfway down, the ground suddenly shifts beneath your feet and falls away, revealing a black chasm beneath you. The stones you're standing on slip into the blackness, and you follow.

The pit is 10 feet deep and filled at the bottom with water and soft earth. Each character that falls into the pit takes 1d4 points of damage. They also get muddy from the experience. The edges of the pit are rough and sloped, so it is relatively easy to climb out.

If the characters are a bit more cautious (and if the players listened to you when you told them about all the water damage in the hallway) and indicate that they are checking out the corridor as they move into the hillside, read the following:

> You move cautiously down the hallway, making sure you have a firm footing on the uneven flagstones. One of the stones beneath your feet shifts as you touch it, and you pull back quickly. With a deep rumble, a large hole opens directly before you. Another step, and you would have fallen into a large, muddy pit.

If the characters were cautious, give each of them 10 XP. (As the DM, you're allowed to reward players for smart thinking.)

The pit is a ragged hole in the floor, and once it has opened it will remain there permanently. There is enough of a ledge around it that the characters can get past it easily.

Note that this is a natural pit caused by erosion. Some evil creatures put pits in their lairs just to catch those foolish enough to trespass, and sometimes those pits are filled with sharp spikes or poisonous snakes. (Just thought you'd want to know.)

When the characters reach the door at the other end of the corridor, they see it is badly rotted, and its hinges and latch are extremely rusted. There are words carved on the door, almost invisible because of the damage. The sign reads:

SCRIPTORIUM
DO NOT DISTURB

A scriptorium is a place where scrolls and books are copied, usually by scribes or monks. (You can tell the players that–it's something that their characters would likely know.)

The door is almost completely rotted out, and will disintegrate at the first touch. Go to the next section.

The Scriptorium

When any character first touches the door (tries the knob, leans against it, knocks on it, whatever), read the following aloud:

> The rotted door falls apart at the first touch. The wood cascades into a pile of splinters, and the hinges and knob clatter to the floor.
>
> On the other side of the doorway is a large, square room, about 30 feet on a side. There is another door directly opposite yours at the far side of the room. The floor in here is more level and dry than the corridor was.
>
> The room holds six copy desks and stools. Four of the desks are occupied by what look like monks, dressed in robes that at one time were fine but are now old and rotting, their bodies hunched over.
>
> One of the monks looks up at you, his hood falling back as he does so. He has no skin or flesh, only a skull with small flickers of red flame burning in the pits of his eye sockets. He raises a bony hand and points at you.
>
> As if by silent signal, the other three monks get off their stools. Their robes fly open, revealing that they are nothing more than animated skeletons. They all carry rusted, triangular daggers. They move toward you.

There are four skeletons, though only two may attack a particular target. If the characters stand their ground in the doorway, then only the front rank may be attacked. The characters get to make their attacks first, then the skeletons.

Because the skeletons are magically animated bones, they are less affected by weapons that cut. Swords, arrows, and daggers cause less damage when used against a skeleton.

- Darkblade needs an 11 or higher to hit. If he hits with his sword, he does 1d8 damage, then adds 1 point for his high strength. Find the total damage he causes, then divide by 2, rounding up ($2\frac{1}{2}$ becomes 3). If he uses his bow, he can attack twice, even against different skeletons, and do 1d8 damage. Again, divide the damage by 2 after it is rolled. Once the skeletons get close enough to attack, the bow is useless.

• Elanna needs a 12 or higher to hit. If she uses the two-handed sword, she rolls 1d10 to determine how much damage she does. If she uses her dagger, she rolls 1d4 to determine damage. Again, divide the result by 2.

• Niles needs a 13 or higher to hit. He will cause 1d6 damage if he uses his short sword, and 1d4 if using his dagger. Divide the result by 2 to determine how much damage Niles does to the skeleton he attacks.

• Thaddeus needs a 13 or higher to hit. He causes 1d6 damage with the quarterstaff—and this result is *not* divided by 2. The quarterstaff is a blunt weapon, not a cutting weapon, so it does full damage to the skeletons. If Thaddeus casts his *magic missile* spell, he does 1d4+1 points of damage to the skeleton of his choice (no attack roll is needed). If the player running Thaddeus wants to cast his *sleep* spell, you should mention that the spell would have no effect because the skeletons are not alive and the magic of the *sleep* spell only works against living creatures.

The remaining skeletons get their chance to attack back after the characters get their chance to hit. For each skeleton, roll 1d20:

• To hit Darkblade, a skeleton needs a 15 or higher.

• To hit Elanna, a skeleton needs a 16 or higher.

• To hit Niles, a skeleton needs a 12 or higher.

• To hit Thaddeus, a skeleton needs a 9 or higher.

A skeleton causes 1d6 damage when it successfully hits a character. The skeletons have 5 hit points each.

The skeletons fight until either they are defeated or the characters are. If the characters flee the room back the way they came, the skeletons will chase them. The skeletons can't catch the human characters, but they are faster than the halfling and will overtake Niles before he escapes the underground area. (The other characters should want to turn around and come back to help if that happens. One way or another, they're going to have to deal with these skeletons.)

Skeletons are worth 65 XP each, so four of them are worth 260 XP total. Just as you did with the rats, divide up the experience points between all the characters who took part in the combat.

When the skeletons are defeated, the players may have their characters search the room. They find nothing in the desks–the scrolls the skeletons appeared to be working on are nothing more than tattered scraps. The triangular daggers the skeletons carried are of an archaic design, and, though stained with rust, are still useful. The Patriarch gives the characters 5 gold pieces per dagger if they bring them back (20 gold pieces total if they part with all of them).

When the characters get around to checking the door out of the room, read the players the following text:

> The door at the far side of the room is made of heavy wood and bound with bands of iron. A large plate of metal is mounted to the door, and that plate is inscribed with a symbol of a bull's head. The door has been locked and secured from the other side.

This door is not just stuck, like the one at the start of the adventure–it has been locked by the inhabitants of the room beyond. The characters may think of a number of ways to try opening the door.

• **Force it open:** They can try to force the door open with brute strength, but it is tougher than they are. It will not open, even if two or more characters try to force it open at the same time.

• **Hack it down:** The characters can try to hack the lock and hinges off the door. Up to two characters can hack at the door, the door is hit automatically (it can't get out of the way), and takes 20 points of damage before it springs open. The downside of hacking at the door is that it warns the inhabitants of the library (the room behind the door) immediately, and they can prepare. (See the next page for more information on this.)

• **Pick the lock:** Rogues are very good at opening locks, and if Niles is present, you can tell the players this. The player running Niles needs to roll a 4 or less on 1d10 in order to pick the lock. Niles can try three times to open this door. If he succeeds on one of those tries, he unlocks it without notifying the beings on the other side. If Niles fails to pick the lock after three tries, the lock is too tough for him to open by using his tools. The characters will have to try something else.

• **Cast the *knock* spell:** Thaddeus has a scroll with a magical spell on it. If he casts the *knock* spell, the lock clicks open immediately (and the spell disappears from the scroll).

The Library

As soon as the characters have managed to open the door, read the following to the players:

> On the other side of the door is a large, well-furnished room. The walls are lined with shelves that are filled with large, water-stained books. The floor is littered with bones.
>
> Directly before you are two zombies, unliving humans with their flesh dried and pulled tight over their bones. Their bodies are missing chunks of flesh. It looks as if something has taken bites out of their arms, legs, and

torsos. They have blank, mindless expressions on their faces.

Behind these two monsters is another creature that resembles a human, but this one is more savage-looking. Its skin is the purple color of a bruise, its eyes glow with a yellowish light, its hair is mangy and patchy, and its teeth are inhumanly sharp. It is a ghoul, an undead creature of deadly power. The touch of its taloned hands or bite can paralyze a living creature.

The ghoul points at you and hisses, "Kill them! Kill the living intruders!" At his command the zombies shuffle toward you.

The ghoul in the library is the one responsible for the missing livestock on the nearby farms, and the bones scattered around the room are from the goats and lambs that it has stolen. The zombies are in its service, and it uses them as bodyguards.

The ghoul does not want to fight, but instead tries to flee with its treasure. How successful the ghoul is in getting away depends on how much warning he had before the characters entered the room. (If they tried to force the door or hack it down, the ghoul is alerted to their presence.)

Here's what the ghoul would prefer to do. As soon as it realizes that it's about to be visited by the characters, it goes to a shelf along the east wall and grabs a small chest that contains its "treasure." That takes one round. Then it goes to the northeast corner, where there is a secret door covered by a bookcase. That takes another round. It takes two more rounds to shove aside the bookcase and open the door. After the ghoul passes through the secret door into a tunnel that leads to the surface, the monster is gone, leaving the zombies to fight the characters.

Summarizing, here are the ghoul's actions, round by round:

1 – is made aware of the heroes outside.
2 – goes and gets the small chest from the shelf.
3 – goes to secret door.
4 – shoves aside the bookcase.
5 – opens the secret door.
6 (or later) – escapes through the tunnel.

This "schedule" means that if the characters take too long bashing in the door, the ghoul is well on its way to escaping. On the other hand, if the characters pick the lock or use the *knock* spell, they can catch the ghoul flatfooted. Where the ghoul is in the room depends on when the characters enter. If they take a long time to get into the room, they find the secret door open and the ghoul standing in front of it. The ghoul tells the zombies to kill them, and dashes into the tunnel in the next round.

The ghoul tries to escape, letting its zombies handle the adventurers, unless the characters manage to cause damage to it. If it is damaged (by a hit from a weapon or by the *magic missile* spell), the ghoul gets mad and attacks the party along with the zombies.

The players need to roll different numbers on 1d20 for their characters to hit the zombies or the ghoul. The ghoul's a little tougher than the zombies are.

- Darkblade needs a 10 or higher to hit the zombies, and a 12 or higher to hit the ghoul. If he hits with his sword, he does 1d8 damage, and adds 1 point for his high strength. If he uses his bow, he can attack twice in one round, even against different targets, and do 1d8 damage, but cannot use it in direct combat.
- Elanna needs a 11 or higher to hit the zombies, and a 13 or higher to hit the ghoul. If she uses the two-handed sword, she rolls 1d10 to determine how much damage she does. If she uses her dagger, she rolls 1d4 to determine damage.
- Niles needs a 12 or higher to hit the zombies and a 14 or higher to hit the ghoul. He causes 1d6 damage if he uses his short sword, and 1d4 if using his dagger. As a rogue, Niles gets a special benefit for attacking from behind. If he manages to sneak up behind a zombie, he needs only an 8 or higher to hit, and if he gets behind the ghoul, he needs a 10 or higher. In addition, he does *double* damage—multiply the result of his roll by 2.
- Thaddeus needs a 12 or higher to hit the zombies and a 14 or higher to hit the ghoul. He causes 1d6 damage with the quarterstaff. If he casts his *magic missile* spell, he does 1d4+1 points of damage to the zombie of his choice or to the ghoul (no attack roll is needed) If he wants to casts his *sleep* spell, tell the player running Thaddeus that there would be no effect—the zombies and ghoul are not living things, and aren't affected by the magic.

The zombies have 9 hit points each, and cause 1d8 damage when they hit.

- To hit Darkblade, a zombie needs a 15 or higher on 1d20.
- To hit Elanna, a zombie needs a 16 or higher.
- To hit Niles, a zombie needs a 12 or higher.
- To hit Thaddeus, a zombie needs a 9 or higher.

The ghoul has 14 hit points and, unlike the zombies, can make multiple attacks against the same target. The ghoul tries to hurt the character that wounded it, but if it has to fight its way through others it will do so. It can attack with both of its claws, each causing 1d3 points of damage (roll 1d6 and divide the result by two), and its bite, which causes 1d6 points of damage. However, if it is carrying its chest of treasure in one hand, it can only make one claw attack. If the ghoul loses the chest or puts it down, it can use both of its claws.

• To hit Darkblade, the ghoul needs a 15 or higher on 1d20.
• To hit Elanna, the ghoul needs a 16 or higher.
• To hit Niles, the ghoul needs a 12 or higher.
• To hit Thaddeus, the ghoul needs a 9 or higher.

The ghoul also has a special ability. Each time it claws or bites an opponent, it has a chance of paralyzing that individual. A paralyzed character can't fight, move, or talk, so zombies can hit him automatically. This paralysis lasts for 1d6+2 rounds. A character can avoid the effects of this paralysis if the player makes a successful die roll using 1d20. This roll is called a *saving throw.* As with combat, each character has his or her own number to avoid the effect of the ghoul's special ability:

• Darkblade, Elanna, and Thaddeus all need a 14 or higher to avoid being paralyzed.
• Niles needs a 13 or higher to avoid being paralyzed.

If a character makes his saving throw, then the ghoul's touch has no effect. A new saving throw must be rolled every time a character is clawed or bitten by the ghoul—avoiding the paralysis once is no guarantee that it won't happen next time.

The characters can choose to let the ghoul escape, but they won't get any experience points for defeating it, and they won't get its treasure. Defeating the ghoul is worth 175 XP, which means 44 XP for four characters, 58 XP for three, and 88 for two.

The zombies are worth 65 XP each, so two of them are worth 130 XP total. That breaks down to 33 points per character for four characters, 43 points for three, and 65 XP for two characters.

The room contains no monetary treasure, but the books are valuable beyond belief to the Patriarch. If the characters bring them back to the Patriarch (or simply bring news back to the Patriarch of the library's existence), he gives each of them 400 gold pieces.

The Ghoul Might Fight!

The way we've set up this adventure, getting away is more important to the ghoul than seeing that the characters are defeated—but you, as the DM, can have the ghoul act any way you want. With some lucky dice rolls for the ghoul and some unlucky ones for the characters, the ghoul might be able to paralyze and defeat all the characters if it decides to stay around and fight. This might be a cruel thing to do to the characters (and their players), but it would be a good way to show the players how dangerous a monster like the ghoul can be. (And you can always back up and start the adventure over, or just replay the scene in the library, if you want to give the characters another chance.)

The chest that the ghoul was guarding contains its personal treasure of gems and magical items. The chest is locked. Niles has a 4 in 10 chance of opening the lock (roll of 4 or less on 1d10), or the *knock* spell can be used, or the lock can be bashed in (one hit from a sword or dagger will do it). Within the box are the following items:

• 12 black pearls.
• A scroll.
• A bottle similar in shape and size to Elanna's potion of healing. If a character pulls the cork, the liquid inside smells like peppermint.
• A dagger with symbols carved along the blade in an unknown language.
• A sack made of blue cloth.

The characters may play around with the items, seeking to figure out what they are, or they can take them back to the Patriarch. The items are explained in the "Wrapping Things Up" section.

If the characters caught the ghoul by surprise and defeated it before it reached the secret door, they might not find the door (unless someone thinks to move the bookshelf aside). If they find the secret door, it leads into a narrow, dark tunnel that burrows for about 50 feet and finally surfaces on the far side of the hill from the tower. This tunnel is how the ghoul made its entry to and from his lair. Otherwise the characters can get out of the ruined tower by backtracking, and then return to the Patriarch with their information.

Wrapping Things Up

If the characters are defeated in the dungeon beneath the ruined tower, read the following:

> Alas! For all your bravery, you failed to discover and defeat the secret of the ruined tower. You awaken a day or two later, resting at the church in the Vale. Hunters found and rescued you. Your wounds are healed, so perhaps it is time to make another foray into the ruined tower.

If you want to, you can try the adventure again, either from the very beginning, or with whatever changes occurred because of the characters' actions. For example, the corridor may already have the pit in the middle of it, and there may be fewer (or more) rats.

If the characters discover some of the secrets of the ruined tower, but then turn back before reaching the ghoul's lair, read the following:

> You return to the Patriarch and tell him what you have discovered. The old man is very excited by your news, and believes that there is greater treasure and knowledge beneath

the ruined pile of stones. He asks if you will return to finish the job, or if you would prefer that someone else gets the honor of discovering the secret of the ruined tower.

Again, you can run this adventure again, either from the very beginning, or with the changes that have happened because of what the characters did the first time they visited this place.

If the characters found the library (whether or not they defeated the ghoul), read the following:

The Patriarch is extremely pleased with your discovery of the library beneath the ruined tower! He believes that it may have belonged to an ancient and powerful wizard, whose lair has not yet been discovered and whose treasure still lies out there, waiting for brave adventurers to find it! Congratulations!

If the characters defeated the ghoul, add this:

The Patriarch is happy that you have defeated the ghoul that was plaguing the local farms and homesteads. With this menace put to rest, he can turn his attention to other matters, such as finding the hidden tomb of the wizard who once ruled the valley.

As stated above, the Patriarch gives each character 400 gold pieces to reward them for their discovery of the library. If they defeated the ghoul, he gives them an additional 100 gold pieces each.

Give the undefeated characters a special story award of 200 XP for completing the story, even if they didn't actually defeat the ghoul. Remember, the Patriarch wanted information, so they still accomplished a lot.

The Patriarch will gladly identify the magical items the characters found:

- The pearls are worth 100 gold pieces each.
- The dagger is made of magically sharpened and reinforced metal. It is a *dagger+1*, which adds 1 point to a character's attack roll and 1 point to any damage the attack causes.
- The scroll contains spells, which a wizard may cast. It has a *knock* spell, a *magic missile* spell, and a *lightning bolt* spell—which shoots a bolt of lightning that causes 6d6 points of damage.
- The liquid in the bottle is a potion of *extra-healing*, which heals 3d8+3 points of damage, or 1d8 if a third of the potion is drunk.
- The bag is bigger on the inside than on the outside. It is a *bag of holding*, and can hold up to 250 pounds of stuff while still being easily lifted.

The players can work out their own ways of dividing up the treasure. The best way to split up the gold and gems is to give every character an equal share. Magical items can be divided up according to usefulness—the wizard should get the scroll, one of the fighters the potion, the other fighter the dagger, and the rogue the bag, for example. Or, the players can roll dice and the high roll gets the first choice.

Each character has a new XP total now—the original number plus any XP earned during the adventure. When a character goes over the "Next Level" number, he or she gains more power, more hit points, and more abilities.

The number of gold pieces a character has is recorded in the "Gold" blank on the character sheet. As the game goes on and characters have more adventures, they can buy things with their gold—better weapons and armor, magical scrolls, and other handy items.

Once the treasure is divvied up and the XP and gold recorded on the sheets, the characters retire to the local inn for a fine meal to celebrate their adventures and brag about their success. They might even buy some more equipment in The Vale. The players can bring these characters back to play again, through another adventure, on another day.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Congratulations! You've run your first D&D adventure. If you've had a good time, you might want to know what you can do next.

Other D&D adventures are for sale at your local hobby shop or bookstore. For starters, look for *Wrath of the Minotaur* and *Eye of the Wyvern*.

If you think you've got a handle on playing the D&D game, you might check out *Introduction to ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*. This big box of game materials gives you more of the nitty-gritty of the rules and gets into more detail, while still being easy for a new DM and players to follow.

If you want to leap into the deep end (and admit it, you really want to), you might want to check out the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® hardback rulebooks, also available at many stores. These books contain all the information you need to start and play an entire series of adventures.

To learn more about the D&D game by visiting the Internet, go to our website at **www.tsr.com** and get a look at everything we've got to offer.

What happens to Darkblade, Elanna, Niles, and Thaddeus? They'll still be around for the next time your players want to run them in another adventure. Or your players may want to create their own characters, have their own adventures, and make their own legends.

Worlds of Adventure are waiting for you. Ω

the watery plane, or, if they so choose, search the other planes available to them through the *well of many worlds* (area **5**). Spellcasters might wish to remain for a time and make use of Diehl Kranar's extensive library or the great mirror in area **25**. The wizard tries to dissuade spellcasters in the party from using the *mirror of truth*, and he gives warnings about its use. Unfortunately, Diehl views each person's destiny as his or her own, so he does not forbid the use of the *mirror*. Whatever the PCs decide, Diehl Kranar aids and supports them as long as their actions do not endanger his home or monopolize his time.

If, for some odd reason, the party decides to try to entrap or destroy Diehl Kranar, the DM should make sure the battle is brief but telling. The wizard is not caught unawares again, and his power is not such that the party is dispatched easily. Perhaps he would not destroy them, but he might banish them to another, more hostile plane. Ω

Coming in Issue #73

Cover by Stephen Daniele

Recover the bones of a dracolich in "Eye of Myrkul" by Eric L. Boyd. An AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure, levels 6–8. Fifth of a five-part series!

Unearth the secrets of a magical stone in "Quoitine Quest" by Greg Rick, Cal Rea, and Kate Chadbourne. An AD&D adventure, levels 1–3.

Rescue a parish from the local priesthood in "The Setting Sun" by Andy Miller. An AD&D GREYHAWK® adventure, levels 5–8.

Face the wrath of the forest folk in "Faerie Wood" by Jeff Crook. An AD&D side trek, levels 1–2.

Befriend a dog with a taste for blood in "The Necromancer's Pet" by Jason Duke. An AD&D side trek, levels 4–6.

A gnoll scout searches the ruins of the Moon Steps.

UNDER A PALE MOON

BY JASON CARL

Remains of the day

Artwork by Stephen Schwartz
Cartography by Delfino

There is no truth to the rumor that Jason Carl is the fictional creation of a trio of Siamese cats who, in addition to being avid roleplayers, are currently trying to discover a means of registering to vote.

"Under a Pale Moon" is an AD&D® and DRAGONLANCE®: FIFTH AGE® adventure set in Northern Ergoth, the last great stronghold of human sovereignty on Ansalon. The heroes attempt to explore the legendary Moon Steps, a mystic site located in the Sentinel Mountains.

If played as an AD&D adventure, "Under a Pale Moon" works best with 4–8 heroes of levels 2–4 (about 16 total levels). The party should include at least one priest and one wizard.

If used as a FIFTH AGE adventure, "Under a Pale Moon" plays best with at least one sorcerer and mystic among the heroes. The challenges of this quest are suitable for 4–6 heroes with reputations of Champion and above. Information that is specific to the FIFTH AGE game is presented in shaded text boxes for quick reference:

> If this adventure is used in conjunction with the FIFTH AGE game, the Narrator should make sure that every player has a hero sheet and the correct number of cards in his hand. For details on hero cards and sheets, refer to Book One of the FIFTH AGE rules.
>
> For further information on the terrain, conditions, perils, and encounters in Northern Ergoth, as well as a useful map of the region, refer to the FIFTH AGE Dramatic Supplement *Heroes of Defiance*.

Adventure Background

The Moon Steps of Northern Ergoth were once an important and powerful god-mark, one of three "celestial stairways" that reputedly linked Krynn to the home of the gods themselves, while at their base were shrines dedicated to the gods of magic. The Moon Steps collapsed in the wake of the gods' departure from Krynn, burying the shrines under tons of rubble, leaving only a vast ruin in a long and narrow valley. However, the heroes have reason to believe that the ruins might continue

to harbor powerful magic (see below); such magic might prove invaluable in the struggle to wrest the land from the tyrannical Dragon Overlords.

The adventure begins as the heroes approach the valley where the ruins of the Moon Steps await them. They have just completed a long journey to reach this point, pushing themselves almost beyond their endurance to arrive at the ruins just before the night of the next full moon.

In Act One, the heroes arrive at the valley containing the ruined Moon Steps. The heroes must locate a safe means of entering the valley. After they reach their goal, they find they have little time to examine the ruins before they are opposed by a band of well-armed gnolls making its way through the ruins.

Act Two finds the heroes facing the gnolls' masters: a band of Ackalites, fierce warriors native to Northern Ergoth. They, too, are on a mission to explore the ruins of the Moon Steps seeking evidence of godly magic, although their ulterior motives could place them at odds with the heroes' plans. The Ackalite warband has a much more immediate concern. They seek shelter from the monsters hot on their heels. The heroes and the Ackalites must quickly decide if they wish to fight one another or pool their strength and drive off the beasts that have pursued the Ackalites all the way to the ruins of the Moon Steps.

Before beginning the adventure, the Narrator must establish the heroes' motivation for exploring the ruins. Perhaps they are representatives of the Citadel of Light who wish to verify certain reports from an earlier expedition to the site. The notes of that journey suggest that, despite their ruined state, the Moon Steps might still contain residual magical power common to Krynn's Fourth Age. If the ruins are indeed a repository of such arcane energy, the heroes might find a means to harness these powers. The members of that earlier expedition noted that the site seemed to enhance magical ability. The accounts imply that this effect seemed even more pronounced when Krynn's single, pale moon was full in the night sky. The heroes might wish to confirm the reports' sketchy details to provide a more accurate account to the Citadel of Light. The heroes could also be adventurers who have recently attended the Imperial Court in Gwynned. The court sponsors numerous expeditions to explore the ruins of the old Ergothian Empire for the express purpose of locating archaic magical items. The Emperor has reputedly offered lavish rewards to those willing to journey to these locations (including the Moon Steps) and return with intact magical items, or proof thereof.

Knowing the heroes' motivations enables the Narrator to determine the route of their journey to the Moon Steps. Setting out from the Emperor's court, the heroes travel northeast overland until they cross into Ackal Province and reach the Moon River. Following the river against the current, they eventually reach its headwaters in the foothills of the Sentinel Mountains. From there, the heroes must enter the mountain range itself, traveling northward—and almost continuously upward—for two days to reach the valley where the ruins lie. Should the heroes begin their journey at the Citadel of Light, or elsewhere, they can choose to sail to Northern Ergoth and seek the mouth of the Moon River along its northeastern coast. This is a perilous alternative; not far from the location where the river meets the sea is Ogara, the homeland of several tribes of savage trolls. The trolls might interpret a river expedition as a prelude to an attack and invasion.

Act One: Valley of the Moon Steps

Scene One: Down In the Valley

This scene locates the heroes high atop a steep hill overlooking a long, narrow valley within the Sentinel Mountains. The adventure presumes that the heroes know one another, and that they have made the difficult journey to the Moon Steps together for a common purpose.

The heroes have just crested the ridge of the steep hill above the valley of the Moon Steps. There appears to be no immediate means of descending the steep hill into the valley.

The heroes, if they have horses, cannot bring their mounts into the valley: The steep, narrow passes that lead through the Sentinel Mountains to the Moon Steps do not permit passage by earthbound mounts. Knowing this ahead of time, the Narrator should assume that the heroes accomplished the long, draining trek up the rugged terrain on foot. Narrators should refer to the accompanying map of the valley and ruins during this and subsequent scenes.

First Impressions

> Your vantage point atop a narrow ridge affords you a splendid view of the valley below. The sun, now past its midday zenith and arcing slowly toward the horizon, reflects off what was once a celestial spiral stairway that rose majestically into the heavens, but is now merely a vast ruin stretching along the valley floor hundreds of yards below. Huge, ragged chunks of dull gray masonry lie strewn across the landscape for over a hundred yards in either direction, silhouetted against the sky like the building blocks of some enormous and forgetful child. The largest sections of rubble are easily ten yards or more across. The spaces between the huge stones are filled with quantities of smaller rubble. The height of the ruins varies across its length, the fallen stones creating peaks and valleys, crevices and caves of varying depth and shape. A thick, almost tangible silence hangs over the ruins. Straining your ears, you hear nothing, and not even the slightest breeze disturbs the air. It is as if the gods themselves decreed a reverent silence around this place—a monument dedicated to the memory of their past glories.

The heroes' mission is to explore the ruins of the Moon Steps and to discover whether the rumors of their effect on magical powers are true. Because these tales also claim that the influence of the Moon Steps is greatest under a full moon, the heroes have wisely planned their arrival at the site to coincide with the night of the full moon. Tonight, when Krynn's single pale moon rises full in the night sky, the heroes might discover whether the tales speak true or are merely disappointing legends.

The heroes will need to enter the valley to examine the ruins more closely. They do not see any safe means of descending the hilltop on foot, as the sides facing the valley appear steep and treacherous. They can negotiate the valley walls by making four successful climbing checks at –25% each. Otherwise, they must reconnoiter the hills if they hope to find a means of entering the valley safely. A search of the nearby hills produces positive results. After about an hour, the heroes manage to locate two clear pathways that lead from the surrounding hilltops down into the valley. Read or paraphrase the following text:

> Moonrise is only a few hours away when you spot what appears to be the remnants of a roadway. In bygone days this wide, graded avenue was paved with cobbled stone. It led directly from the ridge of this hilltop in a long, curving route down into the valley, almost to the very foot of the Moon Steps. The route has suffered severe damage, for its surface is now broken and cracked, pitted with deep holes, half-overgrown with scrub brush, and littered with loose shale and rubble. While steep, the roadway offers what appears to be an easier route to the valley than any of the steep hillsides you have seen thus far.
>
> A brief survey of the surrounding landscape also reveals a narrow game trail, formed much more recently by the passage of many animals. The trail lies about fifty yards from the roadway, sometimes paralleling its course and sometimes veering in another direction. The game trail appears less pitted than the roadway, and almost rubble free. It is narrow and winding, however, permitting travel only in single file.

The game trail is actually more dangerous than the broken road due to its steep grade. Regardless of their choice, the heroes must use care in descending into the vale. Movement rates along either route are halved.

Should the heroes choose the shattered remains of the road, they find it rough going. While sufficiently wide to accommodate heroes walking two abreast, loose rubble and exposed brush roots make for a perilous descent. Unless they are careful, the heroes might slip and fall. Following the shattered pathway leads the heroes almost directly to the eastern face of the ruins in about an hour.

A hero attempting to navigate the broken road without a walking stick, staff, or other aid must make four Dexterity checks (one check every 100 yards). If the hero has a walking aid, each of these rolls receives a +2 bonus. A failed roll indicates that the hero has twisted his ankle, suffering 1 hp damage and a one-third movment rate reduction until the wound heals.

The game trail can be traversed in single file only. The trail begins on a relatively easy grade but quickly grows steeper, making it difficult for the heroes to maintain their footing. (It was created by four-legged beasts, after all, and was never intended for bipeds.) The trail eventually deposits heroes about 300 yards to the southeast of where the ancient roadway meets the ruins.

The game path is about 200 yards long. Traversing the path requires two Dexterity checks. A failed roll indicates that the hero has slipped and tumbled down the hillside. This danger can be minimized by taking precautions and using proper climbing tools. Otherwise, the hero tumbles

Act One: Scene One Actions

Descending the shattered roadway
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: If a hero takes the precaution of using a walking stick, staff, or other object to probe the ground ahead of him this action becomes one degree easier as the hero detects loose rubble and exposed roots that might impede his progress. Success means the hero navigated the broken roadway from the ridge to the valley floor without complications.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the hero stepped on loose rubble, an exposed root, or a hidden depression in the roadway. The hero slips and falls to the ground, sustaining only minor cuts and bruises. After a short descent, he picks himself up and ascertains that he is not injured and that none of his possessions are broken or missing.

Traversing the game trail
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: The path is only about 200 yards in length (approximately half that of the broken roadway, contributing to its initial appeal), but it is composed almost entirely of loose shale and gravel-like stones. Heroes must make an Agility check for every 50 yards they traverse (a total of four in all, from the ridge to the valley below). After each successful check, the Narrator should inform the hero that his footfalls dislodge an ominous quantity of loose rock and sand as he descends.

If the hero is a centaur, the task is easier by one degree due to the quadruped's increased stability on rough ground.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the loose ground gives way under the hero's weight. The hero loses his footing and begins tumbling and rolling along the slope to the valley floor below, sustaining an injury when he reaches the bottom. The Narrator should determine whether any of the hero's possessions are broken or missing as a result of his tumbling fall down the slope by drawing a card from the Fate Deck. If the card has a black aura, one item is lost. Heroes who slip and tumble to the end of the trail are injured, and lose one card from their Hand of Fate.

Climb the ruins
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: If a hero attempts the climb with proper gear (rope, pitons, etc.), this action becomes one degree easier. Success indicates the hero climbed from the rubble-strewn valley floor to the top of the ruins, nearly 80 feet above the valley floor. If the hero is a centaur, it becomes two degrees more difficult. It takes about a half hour to reach the top of the ruins without any equipment; climbing gear makes the ascent safer but doubles the time spent climbing.

Mishap: A mishap means the hero looses his footing or misses a handhold while climbing and falls from the ruins to the ground. If the hero took precautions, such as attaching himself to a rope and pitons, he sustains only one damage point and falls only as far as his equipment permits. If the hero was attempting the climb without making any such preparations, he falls all the way down to the valley floor, landing amid the jagged rubble and sustaining three damage points. Armor does not protect from this damage.

to the valley floor, landing amid the jagged rubble and sustaining 3d6 hp damage.

Examining the Ruins

Once they reach the valley floor, the heroes may begin exploring the ruins of the Moon Steps. Walking around the ruins to reconnoiter the area takes about an hour and a half. This lengthy circumnavigation is due not only to the ruins' huge size but also to the chunks of rubble spread out across the vicinity, further remnants and reminders of the Moon Steps' destruction. The heroes must pick their way carefully to avoid stumbling over loose rubble.

> Walking near the ruins is difficult, as you must avoid the numerous broken chunks of masonry that litter the ground near the Moon Steps. The enormous heap of rubble rises high above the valley floor, a foreboding testament either to the skill of its craftsmen or the unimaginable power of the gods. The silence you noted on the ridge still reigns here in the valley; even your own footfalls and conversation seem muted to your ears.

The heroes may climb the Moon Steps to better view them and the surrounding area. The climb is not easy (requiring a successful climbing check with appropriate modifiers as determined by the Narrator) but rewards the heroes with a spectacular view of the ruins and valley.

If the heroes complete the climb successfully, read the following:

> You pull yourself to the top of the ruins. From this vantage point, you can imagine the awesome sight the unbroken steps must have presented to those on the ground below. The air is cool and dry against your skin. The sun has already started its descent toward the western horizon—soon dusk will fall, then night, and finally the moon will rise over the ruins. From here the sunlight heightens the contrast between the gray ruins and the shadows formed the holes and depressions in the rubble. A lonely, lingering desolation clings to the valley and the toppled ruins.

The initial approach and reconnaissance of the Moon Steps should be tense. However, the valley has few permanent inhabitants, as the magic surrounding the valley tends to scare away the more timid beasts.

The heroes have journeyed far and faced many hardships to find this place, and they have no idea what they might encounter here. A sense of anticipation should underlay the heroes' apprehension—they are, after all, near the conclusion of their quest. Lower your voice and speak in hushed, but energetic, tones when you answer the players questions about what they see before them.

Climbing the fallen Moon Steps and making a complete circuit of the valley floor enables the heroes to discover the gnolls already making their way through the rubble. Proceed with Scene Two.

Magic of the Moon Steps

The Moon Steps have a peculiar enhancing effect on magic. The true nature of the effect varies depending on whether it is day or night in the valley. See the sidebars on pages 52 and 53 for details.

The Narrator should review the "Daylight Magic" sidebar for information on the effects that the ruins have on magic energies while the sun is still in the sky, as this scene and the next might present the heroes with their first opportunity to test the rumors and legends surrounding the valley ruins.

Scene Two: We Are Not Alone

This scene takes place shortly after the heroes have had an opportunity to explore the ruins. In the midst of their examinations, they are surprised to learn that a band of gnolls is also exploring the vicinity.

The gnolls are advance scouts for an approaching party of Ackalite warriors and are currently exploring the northern portion of the valley ruins.

The gnolls are not likely to observe the heroes first, engrossed as they are with searching the ruins for a defensible position. They are making a hurried examination of the ruins, hoping to find somewhere they and their Ackalite masters can hide from a trio of pursuing manticores. They know the Ackalites and manticores are not far behind them. Therefore, the gnolls' attention is focused primarily on the task at hand.

If the heroes walk around the entire ruins area, the chances of one party spotting the other are roughly equal. (In AD&D terms, the DM and players should roll for surprise as usual.) If, however, the heroes choose to climb the ruins, their chances of observing the gnolls before the gnolls see them increase significantly.

If left alone, the gnolls eventually conclude their examination of the western face of the Moon Steps and proceed to the southern face, followed by the east, and finally the north.

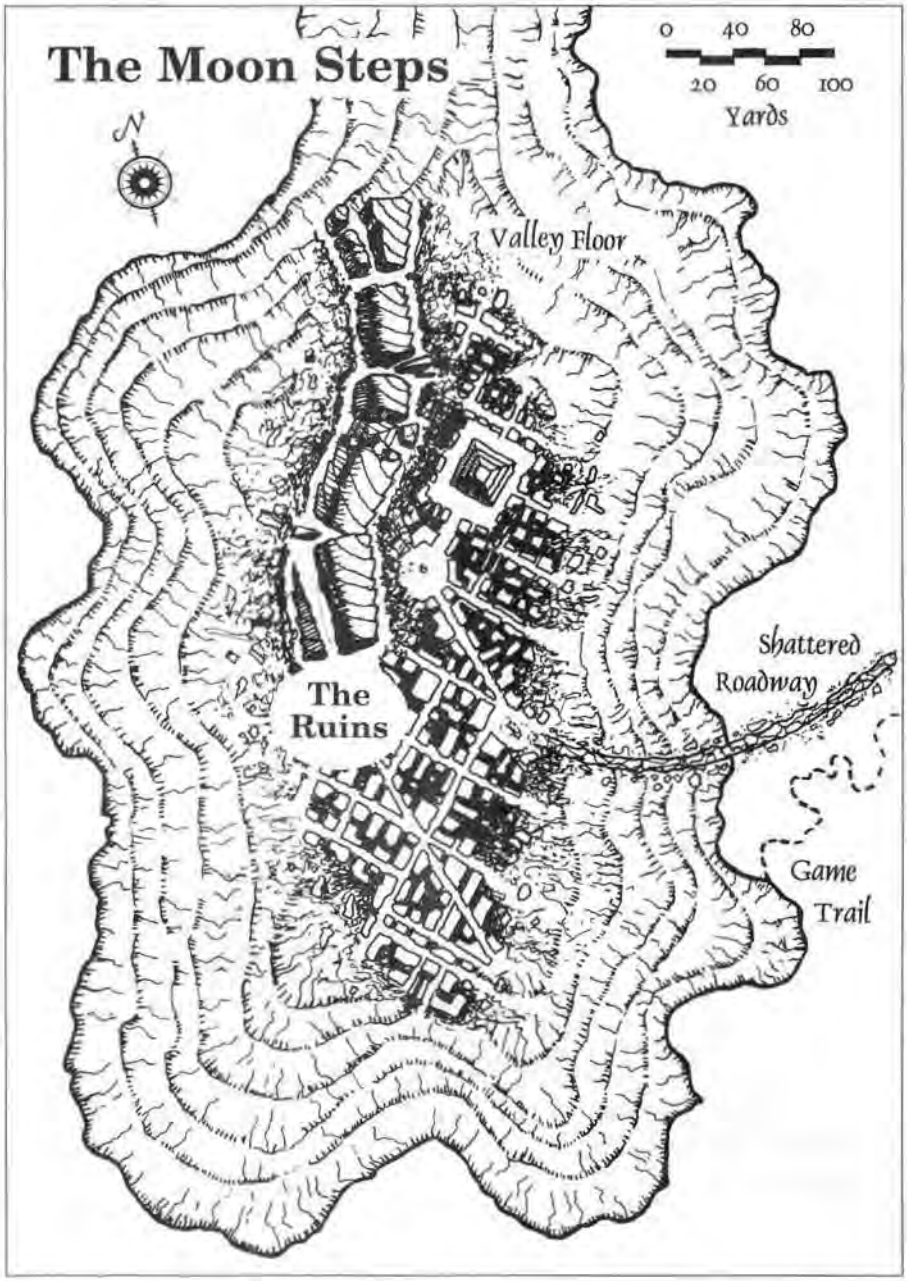
Spotting the Gnolls

If the heroes climb the ruins of the Moon Steps and successfully spot the gnolls from that position, read or paraphrase the following:

> From your lofty vantage point atop the stones, you spot something moving through the northern section of the ruins. You recognize the shapes of ten brutish, dog-headed humanoids making their way carefully through the ruins, ten of them in all, each outfitted in leather armor and brandishing assorted weapons. The creatures are quickly but methodically scanning the southern portion of the valley, as if searching for something. You realize that the creatures are working their way southward.

If the heroes fail to notice the gnolls atop the ruins but spot them by walking around the piles of rubble in the northern portion of the valley, read or paraphrase the following:

> Roughly 40 yards ahead of you, moving with deliberate caution but surprising agility through the rubble, are a group of armed gnolls! You take a moment to observe them and count ten in all, each wearing leather armor and bearing several weapons. They appear to be searching the ruins for something, but they haven't seen you—yet. You realize that they are working their way toward the base of the ruined Moon Steps. You have only a few moments to act before any chance of surprise is lost.



If the gnolls spot the heroes first, they adopt a predesignated battle plan. All but one of the gnolls immediately seek partial cover and launch sling stones at the heroes, hoping to provide cover sufficient for one gnoll to break away and beat a hasty retreat away from the ruins with the intention of warning the Ackalites. The half-hidden gnolls receive a –4 bonus to their AC.

The heroes may get the drop on the gnolls if they saw the creatures first. In this case, the heroes must then decide whether to attack or observe the intruders. If the heroes choose to observe the gnolls before deciding on any actions, they note that the creatures appear to be combing through the shattered landscape as if searching for something.

If attacked, the gnolls defend themselves first with their slings, then their javelins, and finally their short swords if the heroes close to melee range. Their strategy is to put up a sufficiently vigorous fight so that at least one of their number can sneak away from the battle and warn the approaching Ackalites. Their tactics call for using their missile weapons as long as possible to keep the heroes at a distance. Any gnolls who flee the encounter attempt to move northward until they intercept their employers. If cornered or otherwise unable to flee, the gnolls put up a ferocious struggle but eventually surrender if more than two-thirds of their number are killed, or if they are surrounded at melee range by an obviously superior force.

Questioning the Gnolls

Should the heroes capture any gnolls, they might question the gnolls in regards to their presence among the ruins of the Moon Steps. The Narrator should choose one of the gnolls as the designated speaker and read the following response when the time is appropriate:

> The gnoll puffs out his chest and tilts his head upward as he thrusts his lower jaw forward in a display of defiant pride. Though a prisoner, his face betrays neither fear nor concern.
>
> "We're not scared of you, muttonface!" he snarls. "We are scouts for a great warrior! You better watch out, 'cause our boss is coming this way right now, and you'll be sorry if you hurt us!" The gnoll seems utterly sincere in his predictions.

The gnolls are scouts in the service of Karyn'na, an Ackalite war leader who is even now approaching the ruins with her retinue of followers. The Ackalites are about 30 minutes north of the valley when the heroes first encounter the gnolls. The Ackalites are moving at a fast trot, hoping to reach the relative safety of the ruins before they are again spotted by the manticores that have dogged their trail for the last two days. Karyn'na hopes the ruins of the Moon Steps will provide a defensible position from which she and her warriors can fend off the manticores, once the bloodthirsty monsters catch up to them.

Captured gnolls answer the heroes' questions truculently and are purposefully vague about the facts concerning their true motives, hoping

to stall for time. Their time among the Ackalites has instilled in them a sense of honor, and they dare not betray Karyn'na to these strangers. (The gnolls have shifted from chaotic to lawful evil.)

If the heroes ask about the exact number of warriors currently en route to the Moon Steps, the gnolls vary the answer between 10 and 50 each time the question is repeated. They are similarly vague about the type of equipment and weapons these warriors possess, declaring one moment that the Ackalite warriors bear heavy crossbows and spears, and the next minute saying they carry long swords and are capable of working powerful, deadly magic. The gnolls carefully omit any mention of the manticores.

If pressed about the nature of their scouting mission, the speaker for the prisoners replies as follows:

> The gnoll growls. "Our boss told us to search the valley for danger. She is our leader, so we do as she commands. You have any questions, ask our boss. We know nothing, and even if we did, we wouldn't tell you anything unless our boss told us to."

Because the gnolls know that Karyn'na and her warband are due to arrive, they do not try to escape, hoping to provide a distraction when the heroes first encounter the Ackalites.

If the Ackalites are alerted to the heroes' presence, the Ackalites alter their approach, splitting into two even groups and tackling the north and west walls of the valley, hoping to surprise the heroes shortly after dusk (see Act Two). Otherwise, the Ackalites follow their original plan and approach the ruins from the north, moving quickly down the center of the valley without benefit of any foreknowledge about the heroes or the fate of their scouts.

Gnoll scouts (10): INT low (7); AL LE; AC 7 (8 without shield); MV 9; HD 2; hp 16, 15, 14 (×2), 12, 11 (×3), 10, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 11; XP 65; *MM*/158; leather armor, shield, sling, two javelins, short sword.

> **Ten gnoll mercenaries**, *Non-human*. Co 5, Ph 7, In 3, Es 5, Dmg +4 [claws], +3 [short sword], +2 [sling], +1 [javelins], Def –2 [leather armor].

Act Two: Moonrise Over Krynn

Scene One: The Ackalites Arrive

This scene quickly follows the heroes' discovery of, and encounter with, the gnoll scouts. Approximately 30 minutes after the heroes face the gnolls, the Ackalites arrive on the scene.

If the heroes are as yet unaware of the Ackalites' approach, one of two things should occur. Heroes on watch should make an Intelligence check at –4 to spot the warriors as they descend into the valley.

If the heroes are warned of the warband's imminent arrival, they must make a regular Intelligence check to spot the Ackalites' approach from the north. If Karyn'na knows the heroes are waiting for her, her warband splits into two smaller groups and approaches from the west and north, in which case the heroes' Intelligence checks are made at –4.

> Each hero should make a *Challenging Perception* action to notice the Ackalites moving along the northern rim of the valley.
>
> If the heroes are forewarned of the warband's arrival, they need to make an *Easy Perception* action to observe the Ackalites' approach. Add one degree of difficulty to the action if Karyn'na knows the heroes are waiting for her.

Read or paraphrase the following if the Ackalites are spotted:

> The setting sun casts long shadows across of the valley. A number of figures are moving quickly toward the ruins from the northern end of the vale. At this range, you can make out few details, but the westering sun reflects off their armor and weapons, bathing the figures in a blood-red glow. The newcomers are making a hasty descent and rapidly closing the distance between themselves and you.

The surviving gnolls realize that their employers have arrived at last

Act One: Scene Two Actions

Spot the gnoll scouts
Difficulty: Average (8)
Action Ability: Perception
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: The heroes may spot the gnolls only if they are near, or looking at, the northern portion of the valley. If the heroes are watching the north from atop the ruins, this action becomes one degree easier. If they are in the southern part of the vale, the action becomes one degree harder. Success indicates that the heroes observe the gnolls making their way through the rubble to the north, seemingly searching the ruins for something.

Mishap: A mishap means that the heroes completely fail to notice the gnolls, who gain the advantage of surprise as they close toward the heroes' position.

Outflank the gnolls
Difficulty: Average (8)
Action Ability: Dexterity
Opposed Ability: Perception
Comments: If a hero successfully outflanks the gnolls, enabling the hero to maneuver around and behind the gnolls without being detected. The hero can use this advantage to gain surprise in a combat situation.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the hero not only failed to outflank the gnolls, but unwittingly exposed himself clearly against the lighter background of the ruins. The gnolls spot the hero at once and either duck for cover or beat a hasty retreat back the way they came. The hero cannot attempt this action again before the gnolls are either under cover or retreating across the valley floor.

Intimidate the gnolls
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Presence
Opposed Ability: Spirit
Comments: The gnolls are proud to associate with Karyn'na's warband. They have traveled together as her scouts for almost an entire year, and they have come to trust her as few gnolls trust humans. Success means that the heroes break down the gnolls' resolve to remain faithful to their employer, and the gnolls reveal to the heroes the true purpose of the Ackalites' visit to the ruins.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the heroes' mishandling of the situation has only strengthened the gnolls' resolve, and they say absolutely nothing at all, maintaining a determined silence even under further threats.

AD&D Daylight Magic

During daylight hours, wizards and priests within 100 yards of the valley ruins experience magical enhancements to their spells and spell scrolls. These changes should not be announced to the players; rather, the players should be forced to discover the true nature of the valley on their own:

- Spells have their casting time reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1).
- Saving throws against spells cast within 100 yards of the ruins are made at –1.
- The ranges of all spells cast within 100 yards of the ruins are increased by 50%.
- Spellcasters have a 25% chance of mentally retaining any spell they cast. The spell remains in the caster's memory and can be cast again. This effect is lost when the caster moves beyond the valley.

and begin distracting the heroes to give Karyn'na every possible advantage. If their limbs and mouths are free, they begin to howl and attempt to flee their position and rejoin the Ackalites. Should their limbs be bound or their mouths gagged, they do their level best to escape at this point, crawling away across the ground, rolling about in hopes of knocking the heroes over, and struggling to the their feet despite their bonds.

If the Ackalites hear or see their scouts struggling in their captivity, they immediately begin moving in the heroes' direction. As the Ackalites draw near, the heroes can note more detail in the newcomers' appearance:

> The figures are clearly human—seven men and one woman. The men are outfitted in ornately engraved leather armor and carry wickedly curved scimitars at their sides. The woman wears a suit of intricately engraved scale mail and bears both an elegantly forged longsword and a shield emblazoned with the design of a storm-tossed ship. The people are tanned and weathered, and the men's heads are braided in complex patterns. The woman wears her long dark hair tied back away from her face.
>
> You note that all wear various types of bracers, necklaces, and other simple jewelry, while each of the men bears a red smear of paint across his forehead.

The Ackalites stop just out of melee range. They regard the heroes with stern, determined faces and expressionless dark eyes, their hands near their scimitar hilts. However, they refrain from drawing the blades at this point. The heroes notice that almost all of them carry bows, but that their quivers are nearly empty of arrows. All eight appear road-weary and disheveled. The Ackalites refrain from attacking unless the heroes do so first. Though aggressive and territorial, the Ackalites are also highly disciplined fighters—their leader has ordered them to wait for her orders, and they would not dishonor themselves or her by attacking without permission. Moreover, they are acutely aware that any fight against the strangers, whose skills and capabilities are as yet unknown, might expend too much of their strength, wearying them further and making them easier prey for the monsters that are still somewhere behind them. Instead they face the heroes silently but resolutely, awaiting some word or sign of their intentions.

When the heroes at last make some overture, Karyn'na responds in a proud, almost regal tone:

> "I am Karyn'na, Daughter of Sarkhem Nord, Chief of the Karthan tribe." She intones each word with the air of one accustomed to command. The warriors at her side stare straight at you, ready to lash out at the merest breath of a command from their leader. Karyn'na continues: "Know that you are within the lands claimed by my father without his permission. What answer do you make, strangers?"

The heroes' response determines Karyn'na's next actions. She knows that the manticores are somewhere close behind them and that the monsters are quite capable of following her warband's trail to the ruins.

SAGA Daylight Magic

Sorcerers and mystics can begin testing the effects the ruins have on their powers right away, perhaps even as soon as they first view the site from the surrounding hills. Attempts to cast spells of any sort on the hilltops or hillsides result only in the normal, expected outcomes. Despite the ominous, unnatural silence of the place, the ruins appear to have no effect at that distance.

Casting spells within the ruins is another matter entirely.

During daylight hours, heroes find that their spells are significantly easier to cast as long as they are within 100 yards of the ruins of the Moon Steps. The Narrator should decrease the Difficulty of any spell effect by one point while daylight conditions prevail. No spell effect Difficulty should drop below 1 point, however. The energy with which the gods once imbued the celestial stairway is waning fast and can no longer provide the vast reserves of magical power they once held, at least not while the sun is still in the sky.

Invocation Time	Difficulty
30 minutes	1 point
20 minutes	1 point
10 minutes	2 points
1 minute	3 points
Instant	4 points

The heroes might later discover an additional side effect of remaining within the ruins' area of magical influence. The power of the Moon Steps, even ruined as they are, increases the difficulty of avoiding even the simplest spells by +4 so long as the target of the spell is within 100 yards of the ruins.

Furthermore, sorcerers and mystics alike find their total number of Spell Points enhanced while they remain in the vicinity of the ruins (within 100 yards) during the day. The Narrator should secretly add 10 Spell Points to each spell casters' Spell Point total, but the Narrator is encouraged to conceal this fact from the heroes until such time as the presence of the extra Spell Points would become apparent—such as when a hero believes himself completely drained of Spell Points and does not expect to muster the energy needed to cast more spells. At this point, the Narrator should inform the spellcaster that, much to his astonishment, his store of Spell Points is not entirely depleted. Indeed, he detects within himself an additional, previously unnoticed reservoir of magical power that he may tap at will.

Should the heroes prove honorable or approachable, she sees the hope for a truce and chooses to warn them:

> Karyn'na gestures toward her warband, pausing to weigh her next words with care. "We are tired from our journey to this valley. We set out from Beacon, my father's chief city, more than three weeks ago with twice the number you see before you. All was well until we were set upon by three monsters that combine the worst features of lion and dragon.
>
> "They swooped low to claim eight of my warband with their cruel tail spikes. My men have spent almost all their arrows fighting off the beasts. We sent our gnoll scouts ahead, hoping to find a defensible position among the ruins. The creatures are even now behind us and will no doubt find us shortly. Your words tell me that you are brave people—we offer you the chance to do what few may boast of: Fight beside the warriors of the Karthan Tribe and drive these monsters away for once and all!"

Karyn'na reasons that even if they all survive the encounter with the manticores, she can perhaps turn the situation to her advantage later. She still wishes to question the strangers more thoroughly to determine why they are in Ackal Province and visiting the ruins, but she knows this can wait until after the coming battle. If the heroes agree to stand with the Ackalites against the manticores, Karyn'na immediately orders her warband to begin searching the ruins for adequate hiding places and defensible spots, urging the heroes to do likewise before the beasts are upon them.

The heroes might wish to ask further questions of Karyn'na before committing their aid. The heroes know all too well that more than a few of Krynn's human inhabitants are under the influence of the Dragon Overlords, some reluctantly and some less so. How do they know that the Ackalites are fleeing any monsters at all? They might wish to inquire about who the Karthan Tribe is, and what the daughter of its chieftain might be doing this far from her home. Karyn'na answers such questions briefly and impatiently. She informs the heroes that the Karthan tribe dwells in the section of Ackal province to the north and east of the Moon Steps. The Karthans are primarily a seafaring people, and though most of the Ackalite tribes are rebelling against the Ergothian Empire, she assures the heroes that the Karthans seek only the right to do as they will with their own affairs. If the heroes journeyed to the Moon Steps at the behest of the Emperor of Ergoth, they find relations with Karyn'na strained should they choose to reveal this fact.

Karyn'na is less forthcoming about her own reasons for being in this area. She attempts to evade the question, insisting that there is too little

AD&D Moonlight Magic

During moonlit hours, wizards and priests within 100 yards of the valley ruins experience even greater magical enhancements to spells and spell scrolls. The players should be forced to discover the true nature of the valley on their own:

- ❖ Casting times for spells are reduced by 2 (minimum of 1).
- ❖ Spells cast within range inflict maximum damage.
- ❖ Saving throws against spells cast within 100 yards of the ruins are made at –2.
- ❖ The ranges of all spells are doubled.
- ❖ Spellcasters have a 50% chance of mentally retaining any spell they cast, enabling the spell to be cast again. In effect, the spell remains in the caster's memory like it was never cast to begin with. This effect is lost when the caster moves beyond the valley.

SAGA Moonlight Magic

The moonrise brings a startling change both to the Moon Steps' appearance and their effect on magical powers. When the full moon finally clears the surrounding hills and bathes the valley with its silvery-white light, the ancient, god-hewn stones release a small measure of their once awesome magical energies. The ruins reflect the moonlight with a surprising intensity, creating a brilliant glow which all but transforms night into day. The heroes and the Ackalites, who until now have fought the manticores in near darkness, are now able to see almost as well as in full daylight. The most profound changes wrought by the moonrise are, however, those of a magical nature.

While the full moon shines down upon the ruins of the Moon Steps, the Narrator should decrease the Difficulty of any spell effect's by three points, making spells considerably less difficult to cast. No spell effect Difficulty should drop below 1 point, however. For example:

Invocation Time	Difficulty
30 minutes	1 point
20 minutes	1 point
10 minutes	1 point
1 minute	1 points
Instant	2 points

Likewise, sorcerers and mystics alike are aware that they harbor markedly increased reserves of magical energy, finding their total number of Spell Points enhanced while they remain in the vicinity of the ruins (within 100 yards) when they are bathed in the light of the full moon. The Narrator should add 25 Spell Points to each spell casters' total and should not conceal this fact from the heroes—they are feeling the power of Krynn's vanished gods shine directly upon them, and it is difficult to ignore such circumstances even when one is distracted by a life-or-death battle.

As might be expected, the difficulty of resisting any spells becomes even greater under these conditions, as the very air around the ruins of the Moon Steps fairly crackles with magical energy. The Narrator should apply a +4 difficulty modifier to an action intended to avoid a spell cast within 100 yards of the moonlit ruins.

These effects prevail only as long as the full moon shines in the night sky. When the moon sinks below the horizon, the effects of the ruins on magic return to the conditions which prevail during daylight. The enhancing effect cannot be prolonged or duplicated by removing a portion of the ruins of the Moon Steps (such as by carrying a rock or piece of masonry away from the ruins); it can only be experienced when the circumstances described above are met.

time to dwell on such details before the manticores find them. If forced to choose between discussing the subject and foregoing the heroes' aid, she relents:

> Karyn'na's expression betrays her exasperation. She breathes deeply of the twilight air and fixes her stare on you once more. "My father claims these ruins are all that remain of a great stairway that ascended to the heavens, to the very home of the gods themselves. He bids me explore this place to determine whether it is safe for the sorcerers and shamans of the Karthan Tribe to make a journey to the ruins. My father believes he will find some great magic here that could help him keep the Karthans free of Ergoth's greedy hands. Whether this is true or not, I cannot say. I am here to do as my father bids."

Should the heroes make any hostile motions toward the Ackalites, Karyn'na orders her men to attack, and at her command the warband throws itself into battle with fierce abandon. While in melee range, the warriors use their scimitars; their ultimate goal is to defeat the heroes as quickly as possible so that they still have time to prepare before their pursuers' arrival. The gnolls do their best to aid the Ackalites, if possible. If combat between the heroes and Ackalites breaks out, the Narrator should move immediately to Scene Two—the manticores' arrival.

The heroes might decide to try to outflank the newcomers when they first see the Ackalites making their way down the valley toward the ruins. They might also choose to hide in the ruins to conceal themselves from the Ackalites, hoping thereby to gain surprise. When the heroes and Ackalites stand face to face, the heroes may attempt to impress the Ackalites. This is rather difficult, as the heroes are technically trespassing on lands claimed by Karyn'na's tribe. Impressing the Ackalites requires a successful Charisma check, with a –3 penalty if any of the heroes are rude or behave suspiciously.

Karyn'na is the only surviving child of Sarkhem Nord, the reigning Chieftain of the Karthan Tribe who dwells in Ackal Province. She had an older brother—her father's only son—who perished in a shipwreck two years ago. Ackalite tribes are patriarchal, and it is their custom that women are forever the property of their fathers until such time as they give birth to a child, at which point they become the lifelong property of their husbands. However, it is also an Ackalite custom that a man who has no sons may instead raise a daughter to continue the family line. When her brother died, Karyn'na's father chose to adopt this custom and raise her as he would his son.

Karyn'na enjoys far more freedom than the majority of Ackalite women, and she revels in it. She relishes her authority over her personal warband, and she is accustomed to being obeyed. An expert sailor and competent warrior, Karyn'na has never demonstrated the slightest unworthiness for the trust placed in her. She privately considers herself proof that there is little fundamental difference between Ackalite men and women, and has begun to wonder if there is not something she can do to effect some change in this direction among her own tribe.

The daughter of a chieftain, Karyn'na is always accompanied by her personal retinue of Karthan soldiers, a warband under her command and pledged to defend her with their

Act Two: Scene One Actions

Outflank the Ackalites
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposed Ability: Perception
Comments: If the heroes were forewarned of the Ackalites approach by the gnolls (see **Act One, Scene Two**), the difficulty of this action is reduced by one degree. The warband is moving rapidly across the valley floor toward the ruins, and from their position they command a good view of the land before them. Outflanking them requires the heroes to circle around and intercept the Ackalites before they reach the ruins.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the heroes not only failed to outflank the approaching warriors but unwittingly exposed themselves clearly against the lighter background of the ruins. The Ackalites spy them at once and change their direction, moving toward the heroes' exact position. The heroes cannot attempt this action again until the Ackalites are at melee range.

Hide in the ruins
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: Perception
Comments: The ruins offer many places of possible concealment, from the shelter of large blocks of masonry to the deep crannies formed when the Moon Steps tumbled to the earth. Reduce the Difficulty of this action by one degree for heroes who are dwarves, gnomes, and kender, and increase it by one degree for heroes who are centaurs or minotaurs.

Success indicates that the hero has successfully concealed himself in the ruins and may remain unseen provided he does not break cover or otherwise call attention to himself.

Mishap: A mishap means that the hero failed to locate any useful cover nearby and is exposed to the Ackalites. He may not even attempt to gain surprise against the Ackalites as they approach.

Impress the Ackalites
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action Ability: Presence
Opposed Ability: None
Comments: If the heroes respect the Ackalites' nonthreatening posture and refrain from hostile actions, perhaps making a friendly or at least neutral overture, Karyn'na takes a gamble and greets them with relative cordiality (see text above). To make this impression lasting, however, the heroes must agree to join forces with the Ackalites against the pursuing manticores. Furthermore, the heroes must acknowledge that the valley where the ruins of the Moon Steps rest are in Ackal Province, this particular portion of which properly belongs to the Karthan Tribe.

Should the heroes prove themselves to be honest and honorable people, the Ackalites treat them with respect and civility.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the heroes' words or behavior has angered and offended one or more of Karyn'na's warband. The warriors openly treat the heroes with suspicion, continuing this grudge until such time as the heroes prove themselves worthy associates (perhaps by helping the Ackalites defeat the manticores).

lives. An ambitious young woman, Karyn'na eagerly accepted her father's command to explore the ruins of the Moon Steps. She, too, has heard of the legendary celestial stairway, and believes she will find powerful magic somewhere in the ruins of the Moon Steps that might prove useful in her father's plans. Meanwhile, this mission may further demonstrate the capabilities of Ackalite women both to her father and her fellow Karthan tribespeople.

Karyn'na Nord (3rd-level human fighter): AL NG; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus), +2 (specialization bonus); S 16, D 11, C 12, I 12, W 10, Ch 15; ML 15; scale mail, long sword (specialized), long bow, four flight arrows.

Ackalite warriors (7 2nd-level fighters): AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 19, 16, 15, 12 (×3), 11; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); S 17, roll 2d4+6 for other ability scores; ML 15; leather armor, scimitar, long bow, four flight arrows.

Karyn'na Nord, Ackalite warrior (Karthan Tribe). *Human adult female, authoritative demeanor, Adventurer*. Ag 5A, Dx 6B, St 6B, En 8B, Re 7C, Pe 8B, Sp 7C, Pr 7A, Dmg +7 [long sword], also missile weapons [self bow/+2], four arrows, Def –4 [scale mail].

Ackalite warriors (Karthan Tribe), *Seven human adult males, various demeanors, Novice-Adventurer*. Co 8, Ph 8, In 4, Es 6, Dmg +5 [scimitar], also missile weapons [self bows/+2], four arrows each, Def –3 [leather armor].

Scene Two: Trial by Moonlight

In this scene, the three manticores finally overtake their quarry, just as twilight fades into night and the full moon is poised to rise over the horizon, unleashing the Moon Steps' hidden magical powers.

This scene takes place after the heroes and the Ackalites have agreed to combine their strength and defeat the manticores. Alternatively, this scene can occur if the heroes and Ackalites are unable to reach an accord and fall to blows. Review the sidebars on "Moonlight Magic" (see page 53) to determine the effect the ruins have on magic while the full moon is in the sky.

Night's Roar

Twilight gives way to full night. Within moments, a silvery glow touches the hilltops as Krynn's pale moon begins to rise over the horizon. Without warning, an unearthly, guttural roar splits the night air, reverberating up and down the valley. It is followed by several more roars that seem to shatter the very sky itself. It is difficult to determine exactly where the terrible sounds originate, as they seem to come from the sky all around you. Then you see them—three enormous silhouettes gliding silently, with the leonine bodies and bat-like wings, their manes streaming behind them. The pale moonlight gleams menacingly off the rows of deadly spikes embedded in their tails.

If Karyn'na and the Ackalites did not come to terms with the heroes in Scene One, they dive for cover and ready their bows as soon as the manticores roar their challenge.

The manticores are fierce opponents. While they are clumsy fliers, their tail spikes give them aerial superiority over their grounded prey. Each manticore prefers to fire volleys of tail spikes (1–6 spikes per volley, range as a light crossbow) at targets on the ground. Each beast is capable of firing up to three volleys in this scene. (Normally they would be capable of firing up to four volleys of tail spikes per day, but they have already engaged the Ackalites once earlier this same day.) Following these missile attacks, the manticores prefer to remain in the air to present a difficult target, waiting for their injured prey to bleed to death or to break cover and run. When the manticores sense their prey is too tired or wounded to present further opposition, they attempt to close to melee range, using their wings to maneuver into favorable position. Manticores are not capable of effective dive attacks but instead attempt to glide down behind fleeing prey and use their considerable bulk to bear their prey to the earth while slashing with

Heroes find no reprieve amid the tumbled stones and toppled columns of the Moon Steps.

their front claws. (They cannot use their teeth while flying).

Manticores are carnivores with a voracious appetite. They have a taste for the flesh of humans, preferring it to any other meal. They normally devour their prey immediately after slaying it but sometimes carry carcasses back to their lair for their young. Once manticores begin hunting a particular creature, there is little chance of convincing them to give up the chase. They are capable of working together to bring down their prey, communicating with each other through their guttural roars. Beings of low intelligence at best, manticores seldom retreat, even from creatures that defend themselves with vigor. Only if two of the manticores are vanquished does the remaining monster exercise discretion and retreat, making its way back to its lair north of the valley.

The Ackalites fire their bows at the manticores each time the beasts pass overhead. When their remaining supply of arrows is expended, they attempt to lure the monsters to the ground and engage them in melee combat until either the monsters or they are defeated. The Ackalites have no intention of giving up, for they realize that if they do not defeat the manticores here and now, they will have almost no chance of preventing the creatures from pursuing them until they are all dead.

There are numerous actions the heroes might take if they demonstrate sufficient foresight to join forces with the Ackalites before the manticores reach the ruins. They might wish to seek concealment amid the ruins to hide from the monsters or otherwise make ready for the imminent battle. Heroes might wish to prepare a trap of some variety; this requires a successful set snares proficiency check at –4. If the heroes have not already done so before the manticores arrive on the scene, they can quickly dive for cover amid the ruins when the monsters appear.

This tone of this scene should reflect the tension of a pitched battle. The manticores are ecstatic to have run their prey to earth at last, and the Ackalites are desperate to fend off the monsters once and for all. This grim mood should prevail until the heroes discover the magic-enhancing power of the moonlit ruins, which should instill them with relief and enable them to turn the tide of the battle.

Manticores (3): INT low (7); AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 47, 40, 35; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–8; SA tail spikes (1–4 spikes for 1–6 hp damage each); SZ H (15' tall); ML 14; XP 975; *MM*/246.

Three manticores. *Monsters*. Co 9, Ph 21, In 3, Es 7, Dmg +7, Def –3, plus missile weapons [tail spikes/+7].

The creatures can launch their tail spikes as missile weapons at either near missile or melee range. Every time they do, the Narrator should flip the top card in the Fate Deck. If the aura is white, the manticore has depleted its fully developed spikes and may not attack with them again for a number of days equal to the card's value.

Epilogue

If the heroes had a chance to experiment with their magic under the light of the moon, the heroes now possess the knowledge they sought: The ruins of the Moon Steps do indeed have a startling effect on magical energies, but only under certain conditions. This effect—to the best of the heroes' knowledge—can only be experienced within close proximity to the ruins themselves. Nonetheless, this information is significant in and of itself, for it is possible that the Citadel of Light (or the Emperor of Ergoth) might decide on the basis of the heroes' report to establish an outpost here for further research. If the heroes return to the Emperor's court with this information, they receive whatever reward was promised them in return for their services.

If the heroes did not discover the secret of the Moon Steps over the course of their stay, they might choose to remain in the valley for a few more days to gather as much information as they can. The Narrator might have these heroes encounter some other monsters, affording them more chances to test their spells by day and night. Perhaps a group of draconian spies are surveying the valley, searching for lost artifacts. The ruins that surround and encompass the Moon Steps could hold any number of treasures from the Fourth Age of Krynn. Heroes are free to delve into these ruins, perhaps finding some relic that could give the Emperor of Ergoth an edge when dealing with the Dragon Overlords.

The relationship between the heroes and the Ackalites is in the hands of the Narrator. Regardless of the political differences that might simmer beneath the surface of their interactions, both the heroes and the Ackalites should gain a measure of mutual respect following the battle with the manticores. If the heroes readily agreed to join Karyn'na against the monsters, or if they displayed a measurable sense of honor and bravery in battle, she may invite them to return to the court of her father, the Karthan Tribe chieftain, and add their words to hers when she reports on her findings at the Moon Steps. Even if the heroes are agents of the Ergothian Empire, their assistance to Karyn'na should earn them the right to depart Ackal Province without further hostilities.

The heroes should receive a story award of 500 XP each for befriending the Ackalites, plus another 500 XP for discovering the true nature of the Moon Steps' magic.

All heroes should increase one Quest after completing this expedition to the ruins of the Moon Steps. Should this result in an increase in their Reputation, they can make an attempt to improve a single ability (see the FIFTH AGE boxed set for more information). Ω

For an example of how this scenario can be developed based on the ideas given in the Epilogue, see page 86.

Act Two: Scene Two Actions

Find concealment
Difficulty: Average (8)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: Presence
Comments: The degree of Difficulty is one less for kender, dwarf, and gnome heroes who attempt this action, due to their smaller stature, and one degree greater for centaur and minotaur heroes, due to their larger size. Success means that the hero has successfully concealed himself in a large crevice, ruined building, or niche within the ruins

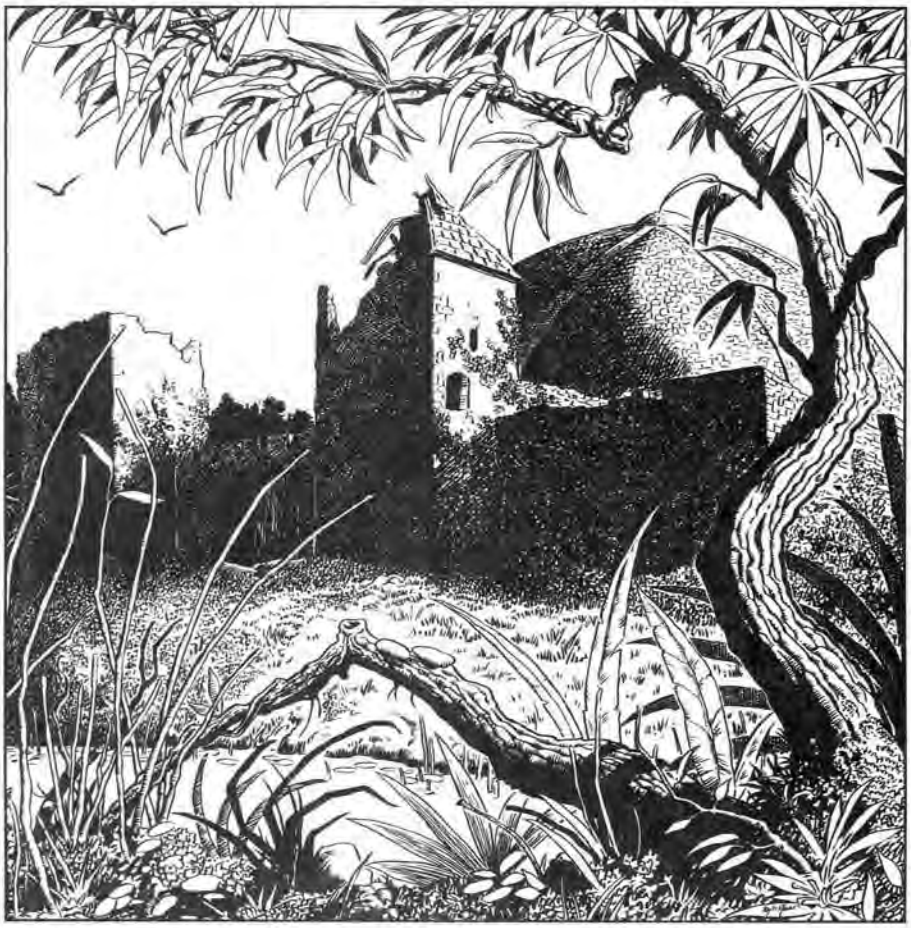
Mishap: A mishap indicates that the hero is not only unable to conceal himself adequately but also has unwittingly presented a clear target for the manticores. The hero must immediately defend himself against an attack from one of the manticores, which takes places outside the normal combat round sequence.

Prepare a trap
Difficulty: Daunting (16)
Action Ability: Dexterity
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: The ruins of the Moon Steps offer few available resources that might aid in the construction of an effective trap. Nonetheless it is possible that the heroes can gather sufficient debris and rubble and arrange them such that a manticore alighting on them might dislodge the rocks and upset the monster. Success means that the heroes are able to construct one trap and complete it several minutes before the manticores arrive.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the heroes miscalculate the proper weight and angle of the rubble trap, accidentally triggering it as they strive to complete it before the manticores show up. Each character involved in creating the trap is injured by the shower of falling rock, losing one card from his Hand of Fate.

Dive for cover during combat
Difficulty: Challenging (12)
Action Ability: Agility
Opposition Ability: None
Comments: This action becomes one degree easier for heroes who are kender, dwarves, or gnomes, due to their smaller stature. Centaurs and minotaurs suffer a one degree difficulty penalty due to their larger size. Success indicates that the hero was able to dive to the ground and conceal himself under or behind nearby rubble, giving them an automatic trump when attempting Missile Defense actions.

Mishap: A mishap indicates that the character misjudged the distance between himself and available cover, leaving himself exposed to the manticores. The hero must immediately defend himself from an attack from one of the manticores, which occurs outside the normal combat round.



The Mere of Dead Men is home to countless ruins and fallen legacies.

MISTRESS ON THE MERE

BY PAUL CULOTTA

Vampire slayers

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography by Diesel

Paul's had some experience designing adventures around vampires, having written "Felkovic's Cat" (Issue #50) and Children of the Night: Vampires *for TSR. Paul dedicates this module to his grandson, Alfred Peter Cappelli III, a.k.a. Tripp, born July 2, 1998.*

"Mistress on the Mere" is an AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure for 4–6 PCs of levels 5–7 (about 30 levels total). It is the fourth adventure in the *Mere of Dead Men* series. Although part of a mini-campaign, this adventure works just as well by itself. The adventuring party must include at least one priest who can turn undead and cast healing spells.

Before running the adventure as part of the *Mere of Dead Men* series, the DM should carefully review the information in the "Series Overview" sidebar.

For the Players

The adventure begins at Iniarv's Tower with Sir Justin Melenikus, knight-protector of the High Road, asking the PCs for their assistance. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> One monster-infested area in this cursed swamp was Castle Naerytar. Little is known about it. A half-elven wizard is rumored to have built the castle long ago, and when he vanished, various sordid swamp creatures moved in.
>
> We had heard rumors about the evil lurking in Castle Naerytar, so you can imagine my surprise when my men found the ruins inhabited by a rather pleasant sorceress named Adele Astrolara. She and her apprentices had apparently used fire-based spells to drive out a nesting tribe of bullywugs, and Lady Adele had claimed Castle Naerytar for herself. She has even hired work crews to begin reconstructing the road from Castle Naerytar to the High Road. I'm not entirely sure why she would want the castle, given its remoteness and present condition, but I would rather that she held the castle than abandon it to monsters.
>
> Recently, some of Adele's young apprentices were found murdered as were members of work crews,

Series Overview

Edging along the eastern edge of the Mere is the High Road, a vital and well-traveled route linking Waterdeep to the northern town of Leilon and, north of that, the city of Luskan. Over the last several months, the High Road between Water-deep and Leilon has been threatened by monsters from the Mere. Caravans report brutal attacks by lizard men on catoblepas mounts, yuan-ti, gargantuan bullywugs, and will o' wisps. There have even been confirmed sightings of a huge black lizard skulking through the Mere. Sir Justin Melenikus, a Waterdhavian knight and paladin of Helm, has grown weary of these attacks and offered his services to the city. Sir Justin and his watchers (specialty priests of Helm) recently left Waterdeep and headed north, clearing bandits out of the ruins of the demilich Iniarv's tower (on the edge of the Mere) and turning the site into their encampment.

Melenikus and his watchers have garnered enthusiastic support from the Lords of Waterdeep, the city's Merchants' Guild, and the local Adventurers' Guild. In fact, a notice has been posted prominently in the Adventurers' Guildhall that reads:

"Sir Justin Melenikus, a renowned knight of Helm, needs brave and hearty adventurers to help slay monstrous threats from the dreaded Mere of Dead Men. Fell creatures have been attacking caravans on the High Road, slaughtering travelers, and endangering Waterdeep's trade with its northern neighbors. Unless the monsters are defeated, all trade to the north could be halted. Sir Justin and his watchers have made camp in the ruins of Iniarv's Tower, located four days' walk toward Leilon. Interested parties should meet with Sir Justin in person.

"Rewards for slain monsters shall be authorized by Sir Justin. Gold shall be paid by the Free Merchants' Guild upon presentation of a stamped writ from the knight himself."

A handful of adventurers have already left the city for Iniarv's Tower, a ruin located in the foothills east of the Mere. Sir Justin is sending several groups into the swamp to rout the monsters. This series explores several key sites where monsters are thought or known to dwell. Using *divination* spells, the watchers have determined that a great evil lurks in the Mere, and that the recent attacks on the High Road are somehow related.

Camp at Iniarv's Tower

When the heroes arrive at Iniarv's Tower, they are well met by Sir Justin. Each time he sends them into the Mere, he promises to reward them with a writ that they can keep and take back to Waterdeep to exchange for gold coins. The amount of the reward varies depending on the party's degree of success (determined by the DM). Sir Justin also offers the following benefits:

❖ Heroes who return to Iniarv's Tower during an adventure may receive any of the following curative magics from the Watchers: *cure light wounds* (up to 8/day), *cure serious wounds* (up to 4/day), *cure blindness or deafness* (up to 8/day), *cure disease* (up to 8/day), *neutralize poison* (up to 6/day), *raise dead* (up to 3/day).

❖ Before embarking on an expedition into the Mere, the characters receive the following items: three potions of *extra-healing* (or one potion of *healing* per PC), two clerical scrolls (*neutralize poison* and *cure disease*) in water-tight bone tubes, and a minor *ring of water breathing*. Each ring's magic lasts only 12 days from the time it is first worn, after which the ring loses its enchantment.

Sir Justin Melenikus (9th-level paladin of Helm): AL LG; AC 0; MV 12; Pa9; hp 73; THAC0 12 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SD detect evil intent (60' range); immune to disease; *cure disease* twice/week; heal 18 hp/day; S 16 (18/00 with *gauntlets of ogre power*), D 12, C 15, I 14, W 17, Ch 18; ML 18; *plate mail +3, Illuminus* (*two-handed sword +2, +4 vs. undead*), *gauntlets of ogre power.*

There are twelve watchers at Iniarv's Tower: two 11th-level priests, three 9th-level priests, three 7th-level priests, and four 5th-level priests. In addition to their healing spells, these priests carry various curative magics in the form of potions, scrolls, and other items they keep under guard. For more information on the watchers of Helm and their magic, consult the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* hardbound book or the *Faiths & Avatars* accessory.

In addition to the priests, Sir Justin has a dozen 4th-level fighters wearing plate mail and carrying *shields +1, long swords +1* and short bows with quivers of magical arrows (all provided by Sir Justin). They are stationed at the base camp to protect the watchers and guard the camp against attacks from the Mere.

each drained dry by a vampire who apparently haunts the swamp. Starmistress Adele increased security to forestall further attacks on her new home, but other travelers along the High Road have fallen victim to the vampire. Although Adele got rid of the bullywugs with few problems, getting rid of a vampire is another matter, especially since she has no priest or paladin in her service. Knowing that we are here, Lady Adele has asked me to send someone to take care of the murderous undead.

If you are up to this task, the Lords of Waterdeep will reward you with 1,000 gp each upon proof that you have laid this creature to rest. Adele might sweeten this reward, but I wouldn't blame you for turning down this dangerous mission.

Sir Justin cannot increase his offer. However, he provides abundant supplies and free healing to PCs in need (see sidebar above). He also promises that his clerics will do their best to *raise* any adventurer who dies. Finally, his clerics give the heroes a scroll bearing a *dispel evil* spell (cast at 9th level), two packets of holy wafers, and up to 15 vials of holy water.

Sir Justin knows little about Adele and her apprentices, who are collectively called the Academy of Stargazers. She has in her retinue two of the finest women guards Sir Justin has seen in many a day: "all business and armed to the teeth." He also remembers that the women (except the two guards) wore light green robes adorned with moons and stars, and that each of them was quite serious and aloof.

For the Dungeon Master

Everything Sir Justin has told the PCs is true as far as he knows. The vampire roaming the swamps and along the High Road is Datou, a former swamp druid who retained many of his special abilities when he became a creature of the night. He is responsible for most, but not all, of the deaths in the area.

Sir Justin does not know that Adele is a penanggalan, a vampiric monster who hates and despises real vampires above all other things. (Real vampires possess the same antipathy toward penanggalans.) Starmistress Adele, as she is known to her apprentices, wants control over this area of the swamp, but after losing a few followers to Datou, she would rather not take further risks. Furthermore, she has no priest or paladin in her service (nor would she entertain the

thought). However, she remembered that Sir Justin had some priests and other adventurers working for him, so she sent a message pleading for help. Sir Justin has decided to respond by sending the PCs to Castle Naerytar.

Sidebars provide all the statistics, powers, and personalities of the two vampires and their followers. The DM should review them carefully prior to running the adventure.

Part I: To the Castle

The trip from the ruins of Iniarv's Tower to Castle Naerytar is over 30 miles and fraught with danger. The DM may include an encounter with swamp creatures such as lizard men, bullywugs, yuan-ti, will o' wisps, or the like. Occasional swarms of mosquitoes and other biting insects make travel miserable. There are two set encounters on the way. PCs who have the means to fly can spot both encounters from the air, assuming they travel during daylight.

A. Ambushed Caravan.

> You spot the remnants of an ambushed caravan, five wagons in all. Expended arrows and javelins are stuck in trees, wagons, and the dead. Several bipedal frog-men and humans lie still, while a few surviving humans wander about the area, trying to comfort their wounded comrades.

The travelers are workers hired by Starmistress Adele. They recently fended off an attack by a wandering band of bullywugs. When they spot the PCs, the survivors grab their weapons and prepare to defend themselves but do not attack. The DM should consider alignment penalties if the PCs attack an obviously mauled wagon train. Approaching them gently with soothing words and signs of peace prompts the victims to relax and sheath their weapons. If the PCs attack, the workers fight for their lives.

Workers (15): AL any non-evil; AC 7; MV 12; F3, F2 (×6), F1 (×9); hp 18, 12 (×6), 6 (×9) at full (but see below); #AT 1; THAC0 20, 19, or 18; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; ring mail, light crossbow, short sword.

The workers' maximum hit points are listed above; to account for the workers' injuries, subtract 1d4+2 hp from each worker's total hit points.

The workers' foreman is Jakus McFee, a grizzled fellow in ring mail armor. He and his comrades hail from Waterdeep and are on their way home after building a road for Starmistress Adele. He begs the PCs to heal his wounded comrades and escort them safely to Iniarv's Tower. He complains that when they left for Castle Naerytar, Mistress Adele provided them two sorceresses as escort, but when they departed, she would not do so, citing the need to keep all her "star-children and sisters" at the castle in case the swamp vampire attacked again.

The heroes might pump Jakus and the other workers for information, which they willingly provide if healed and escorted safely back to Iniarv's Tower. If they merely heal the workers, the PCs are given no information unless the PC with the highest Charisma makes a successful check.

Here is a summary of what the workers know:

❖ They were hired by Star-sister Pernasia to journey to Castle Naerytar. Their job was to drain the castle grounds, clean up the place, and build a road from the castle to the High Road. Pernasia and Hendris escorted the workers to the castle. Enroute the Star-sisters used *fireballs* to route a gang of bullywug bandits.

❖ Before they left Waterdeep, the workers were asked to pick up three heavy wooden crates to transport to the castle. The workers have no idea what was in two of them. (DM's Note: these contained the battle horrors found in areas **8** and **10** of Castle Naerytar.) Upon arrival, the workers opened and unloaded the third crate, and it contained "a disassembled metal tube full of dials and levers" that Mistress Adele said was used to look at the stars.

❖ To their surprise, they did not have to drain the castle grounds. When they arrived, the castle was above the water line, but the place was filthy and it took considerable effort to clean it and make repairs. If asked, Jakus can draw a rough map of the ground and upper levels of Castle Naerytar (but not the dungeon level or secret room in area **13**).

❖ A vampire attacked them the night after they arrived. Jakus lost four members of his crew, and Starmistress Adele lost two of her flock to the fell creature. All the victims but one had puncture wounds in their throats, and they were totally drained of their blood. The last victim, a fellow worker named Harold, simply disappeared. The next night, Starmistress Adele ordered the castle's doors and windows festooned with garlic garlands. Jakus feared that this would not work since vampires are known to turn into gas and slip through cracks and keyholes, but the strategy paid off.

❖ Jakus calls Starmistress Adele a "woman of ice who always had her nose stuck up in the air as if she was smellin' somethin' bad." He remarks sourly that she allowed neither the workers nor the star-children to socialize in any way. On one occasion, a worker tried to flirt with a Star-child named Danielle, and Starmistress Adele flew into a terrible rage and threatened to turn the worker into a newt if he did it again.

One of the wounded workers, an attractive young lass named Roni, remains slightly pale and wobbly despite attempts to heal her. She has no further apparent wounds, but a close examination under her ring mail reveals two lacerations in the hollow of her shoulder close to her neck. The lacerations are about six inches apart. This causes Jakus to cry out that the vampire must have attacked her last night when they made camp, and he renews his pleas for the PCs to provide safe escort.

Roni was not harmed by the swamp-druid vampire Datou, but by Mistress Adele who flew into camp last night and drained her. Roni continues to lose one Strength and one Constitution point each night until a cleric casts *dispel evil* on her.

Among the dead workers is the flirtatious worker who incurred Starmistress Adele's wrath—a man named Feldus Crawley. If his body is examined by the PCs, they find similar lacerations on his neck, a bite from Adele two nights ago (although his death was caused by the bullywugs). If they inquire further, the PCs discover that Feldus had been sick for the past couple of days.

PCs might think to ask the workers if the wounds on Feldus or Roni are the same as the workers who were drained at Castle Naerytar. After some discussion, the workers agree that these lacerations are different. The ones on Feldus and Roni are larger and wider apart.

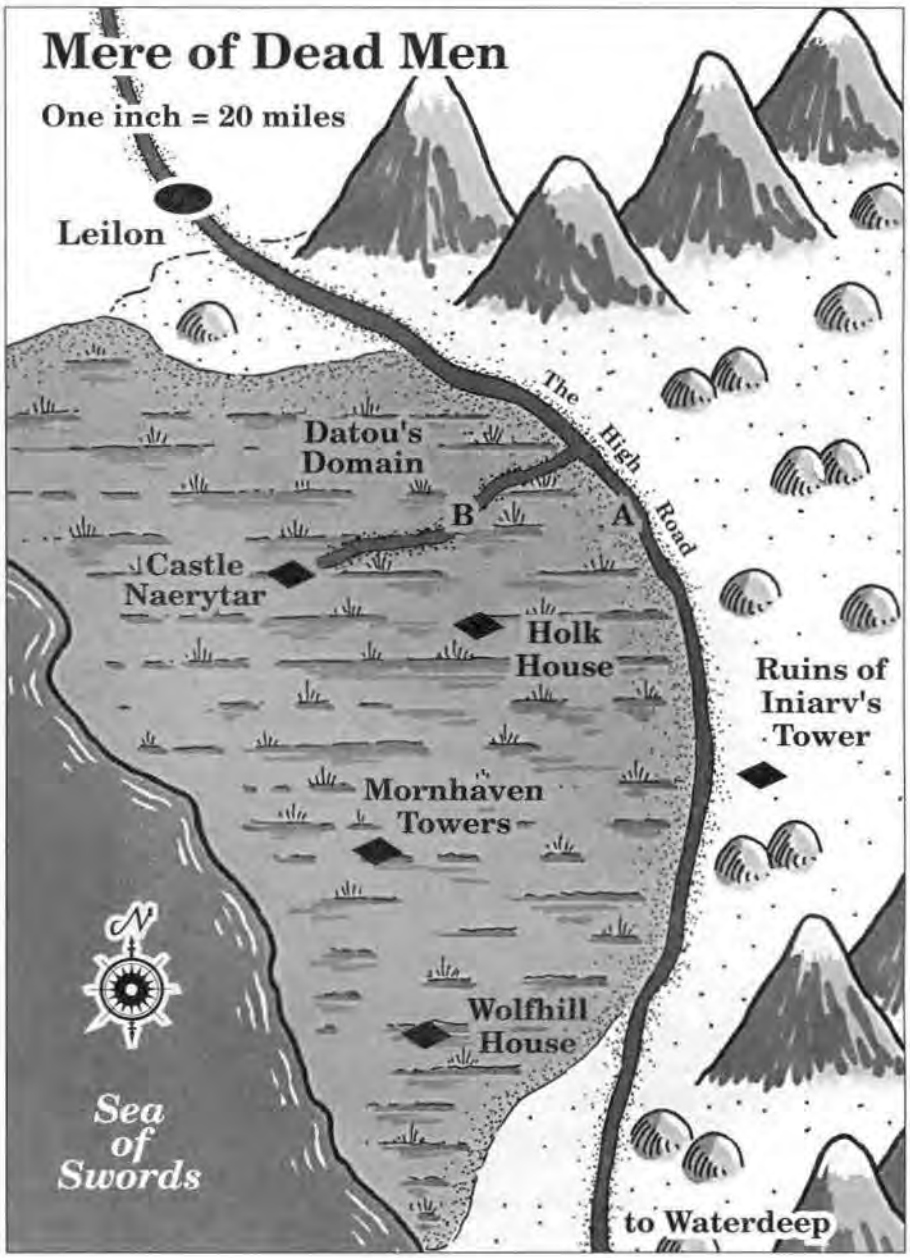
The only items of interest in the workers' wagons are their tools (picks, shovels, and so forth), personal belongings, and food for the journey back to Waterdeep. The workers have a total of 30 gp among them, but Jakus holds a letter of credit for 5,000 gp that he cashes with a jewel merchant in Waterdeep in payment for the work done at Castle Naerytar.

If the PCs escort the workers back to Sir Justin, his clerics remedy Roni's ailment using a *dispel evil* spell but assume that "the vampire" caused these wounds. If night falls before the group returns to Iniarv's Tower, Starmistress Adele approaches the workers' wagons one more time to drain Roni, but once she sees that they are escorted by the PCs, she flies away back to her castle. Because Adele casts *invisibility* on herself before flying out, it is unlikely that the PCs spot her.

In the event that a PC sentry can somehow *detect invisibility*, the DM should keep Adele's description vague at this point ("a big head, as large as a keg of ale, with a long, snaky tail trailing behind it"), and the spotting PC must save vs. *fear*. Another device the DM can use to build tension is to have the horses whicker nervously and strain at their reins, since the animals can sense that something is wrong. As soon as Adele flies away, the animals settle down.

B. Snake Ambush. West of the High Road lies an elevated dirt roadway leading to Castle Naerytar. Nailed to a tree is a rough wooden sign ("Stargazer Academy") with an arrow pointed down the new road. On either side of the road is swampland where insects buzz, frogs chirp, and snakes slither through the bushes and water.

While the PCs travel along the road, the DM should watch the time of day. It is approximately 20 miles from the road junction to Castle Naerytar. If the heroes left Iniarv's Tower in the morning, they should be on this road come nightfall.



Datou has sabotaged the new roadway about half way into the mere. Ten miles down the road, the PCs find that the road abruptly ends:

> Something has leveled a section of the well-constructed road of logs and mud. Thirty feet away you can see where the road resumes its course to the west, but in between lies a mass of broken logs, mud, and pools of dirty water. Several snakes lie coiled atop logs. In the distance you hear a bird scream.

As the PCs cross the impasse to get back on the road, several species of poisonous snakes slither out from atop the logs, out of the water, and from behind trees, bushes, and reeds. The snakes attack in a fury and do not retreat or make morale checks.

Poisonous snakes (24): INT animal (1); AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 16, 15 (×5), 13 (×4), 12 (×10), 11 (×4); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison bite (onset time 1d6 rounds; save vs. poison or suffer 3d4 hp damage); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

If this encounter occurs during daylight hours, on the third round of combat six ospreys, each bearing a snake in its talons, dive at the PCs and drop snakes on the PCs' heads and shoulders. Any PC who fails a surprise roll for this round receives neither Dexterity nor shield bonuses against the ospreys' serpent attack. Once the ospreys drop the snakes, they fly around the PCs, pecking with their sharp beaks and tearing with their talons. Like the snakes, they make no morale checks.

Ospreys (6): INT animal (1); AC 6; MV 1, fly 33 (B); HD 1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2/1–2/1–2; SA 25% chance of pecking eye with beak attack; SZ M (5' wingspan); ML 7; XP 65; *MM*/27 (hawk, modified). The snakes they carry have the same statistics as the other snakes attacking the PCs (11 hp each).

If the PCs reach the ambush site during the evening hours, omit the osprey attack. Instead Datou himself arrives on the fourth round of combat. The vampire stays out of sight behind the foliage as long as possible and casts *protection from fire* and *barkskin* on himself. The DM is free to modify the sequence as necessary to fit the tactical situation. Datou's actions are as follows:

Rounds 1–3: Datou travels to the site and casts his *protection from fire* and *barkskin* spells on himself.

Round 4–5: Spike growth near one side of the road, in case the PCs seek cover there once battle begins. If PCs have moved off the road already, Datou *entangles* them.

Round 6: Summon insects (insects arrive the next round).

Round 7: Casts *faerie fire* on the PCs, directing summoned insects to attack any PC priest.

Round 8: Casts *heat metal* on one heavily armored PC.

Round 9: Casts *giant insect* on two wasps he frees from a jar and directs them to any PC giving him trouble.

Giant wasps (2): INT animal (1); AC 4; MV 6, fly 21 (B); HD 4; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/1–4; SA poison (save vs. poison or suffer 5d6 hp damage and 2d6 hours of paralysis); SZ M; ML 20; XP 420; *MM*/204.

Round 10: Casts *sticks to snakes* on dead limbs near the PCs, creating eight poisonous snakes.

Poisonous snakes (8): hp 15, 14, 13 (×2), 12, 11 (×2), 10; see above for complete statistics.

If he is discovered or his forces are routed, Datou assumes his giant praying mantis form and attacks with claws and mandibles (Dmg 1–6/1–6/1–10). Only the mandible bite drains a victim of energy levels, but the DM should remember that Datou's 18/76 Strength gives him +2 to hit and +4 damage. If both claws hit, Datou holds his target and makes all subsequent mandible attacks at +4 to hit. Breaking free of the preying mantis' grasp requires a successful Strength check.

If the PCs are especially resilient, Datou uses his natural ability to summon an *insect plague* to cover his escape. If necessary, he shapechanges to snake form and slithers away under the swamp water.

The shambling mounds that serve Datou (see "Part III: Datou's Lair") destroyed the roadway. By cutting the road, Datou hopes to prevent any supplies from reaching Castle Naerytar. The vampire has collected the snakes and ospreys and ordered them to attack any person trying to cross or repair the destroyed road. The animals follow his command to the letter: they do not attack mounts, dogs, animal familiars, or anything that does not classify as a person.

This area shares a border with Datou's fog-shrouded domain to the north. Whenever the PCs enter this area, go to "Part III: Datou's Lair." If they continue on to Castle Naerytar, proceed with the next section.

Part II: Castle Naerytar

Castle Naerytar is a partially ruined fortification perched atop a low rise surrounded on all sides by a wide moat of stagnant, odorous water.

If the PCs reach the castle during daylight, they can ride right in after being challenged by Shadra and Julianne, the two guards in Adele's employ. Shadra and Julianne stand watch on the roof of area **2**, ready to repel invaders with their bows. If the PCs have benevolent intentions and mention that Sir Justin sent them, the guards descend the tower, lower the drawbridge, and allow the PCs into the courtyard.

If the PCs arrive after sunset and they haven't encountered Datou yet, he is skulking on the roof of area **2**, trying to figure out some way to get in without being invited. He has tried scratching on the outside windows and door, whispering promises of undying love, and even bribery, all in an effort to convince a member of the Academy to let him in. However, the occupants are well trained and well guarded, and his recent efforts have proven futile.

The drawbridge is up, and the 15' wide, 15' deep moat contains a huge swarm of leeches; a PC in the moat suffers 1d10 hp damage each round. The swarm can be dispersed by any area-effect attack that inflicts 10 or more points of damage (see *MM*/219). Datou generally attacks with the same routine he used at the ambush site (encounter **B**).

During any battle, Starmistress Adele and her companions stay inside Castle Naerytar. If and when a PC crosses the moat and reaches the front door of the castle's main building, he is denied entry until Adele casts her *ESP* spell to scan his surface thoughts, ensuring that he is not the vampire. (*ESP* does not work on undead creatures.)

Castle Naerytar Map Key

Built by a half-elven wizard years ago, Castle Naerytar has a number of magical defenses. First, all conjuration and evocation spells cast within the castle grounds or interior operate at double strength. They last twice as long and have twice the area of effect, duration, range, and so forth. Those that affect armor class such as *shield* provide an additional –2 AC bonus.

Second, the castle is protected by magical wards that prohibit the use of *invisibility, dimension door, phase door,* and *teleport* spells. The stone itself is enchanted such that *transmute rock to mud, stone shape,* and similar spells have no effect on the stonework.

1. Outer Walls. The 20' high walls bear muddy water marks 10' high. In one or two spots are burn marks—evidence of fire-based spells used by the Academy members when they drove the bullywugs out. The walls have no parapets.

2. Tower. The ground floor of the tower serves as horse stables, while

the upper floor houses any visitors, such as the PCs. The upper floor has no fireplace, and its windows have stout, locking shutters. Ladders provide the means of accessing the upper floor and the rooftop. The trap door to the roof is bolted shut from the inside. During the day Shadra and Julianne, the two Academy guards, keep watch from the top of this tower.

3. Courtyard. The open courtyard is bare dirt with a rich, swampy smell. In a few spots, weeds and grass grow fitfully. Next to the entrance are chains and winches for lowering and raising the drawbridge.

4. Ruined Towers. Two of the towers of Castle Naerytar lost their upper floors and roofs years ago. The workers cleaned them out, but no one uses them. When more star-children join the Academy, Mistress Adele plans to house them here. In the bottom floor of one tower is an old chest filled with rusty, but useable, carpenter tools.

Ground Level

5. Meeting Hall. At night the doors are barred from the inside. This large room has several tapestries depicting astrological signs. Three large tables with benches and stools are arranged close to the exterior doorway, while a raised dais with a single chair stands at the far end. This chair is made of polished hardwood and decorated with stars, moons, and comets.

Each time the PCs come here, they are told that their animals (including familiars) must remain outside or in a tower since Mistress Adele does not want Castle Naerytar's interior soiled by animals. The real reason is that all animals can sense that something is not right with her and usually create a fuss whenever she is around.

The PCs first meet Starmistress Adele in this room. The benches, stools, and tables are for meals. No one sits while Adele sits at the dais. When the PCs meet her, read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter the main hall where a group of women stand by a raised dais at the far end. In the only chair sits a tall woman attired in light green robes decorated with astrological symbols, all stitched in

Rules of the Academy of Stargazers

1. The word of the Starmistress is final in all matters.

2. Star-sisters are the right hand of the Starmistress, and their orders shall be obeyed as if she uttered them herself. Their robes shall be embroidered with silver thread.

3. Stargazers are honored graduates of the Academy, second only to Star-sisters and the Starmistress. When they visit the Academy, they shall abide by all rules of the Academy. Their robes shall be embroidered with gold cloth thread.

4. Star-children are novitiates who are learning how to grow up and become honored Star-sisters or Stargazers. Once admitted to the Academy, they may not leave for any reason except for expulsion due to a lack of potential, and only the Starmistress may expel them. Star-children's robes will be plain, but when a Star-child has shown that she might have the potential to become a Star-sister or Stargazer, then she may be allowed to have her robe embroidered with thread of white cloth.

5. The Starmistress shall be addressed as Starmistress by Star-children and Mistress Adele by Star-sisters and Stargazers. Whenever the Starmistress addresses any member of the Academy, the student addressed will curtsy before replying or acting upon any order.

6. No one will sit in the presence of the Starmistress except during meals and classes and then only after the Starmistress has seated herself.

7. Members of the Academy will remain chaste in thought, word, and deed at all times.

8. All members of the Academy will devote their energy to fulfilling their magical potential and learning about the heavens and their portents.

9. Penance for any offense may be meted out to Star-children by a Star-sister or the Starmistress. Star-sisters may be punished only by the Starmistress. Stargazers are not subject to discipline outside the walls of the Academy, but when they visit, they are subject to discipline by the Starmistress. There is no appeal for imposed penance.

10. All members of the Academy must be female.

gold thread. A silver brooch holds back her long black hair, and she holds an ivory sceptre adorned with a golden star at the end. Around the dais are more than a dozen other women dressed in similar robes, although none as adorned as the robes of the Starmistress.

Adele looks at you and says, "You must be the help that Sir Justin promised us. I don't know what he has offered you, but rid this area of that unholy bloodsucker and I will pay you 1,000 pieces of gold. That vampire has killed two of my star-children, not to mention a handful of loyal workers, and he comes here every night to terrorize us. Praise Selûne, he has not found his way inside."

If PCs haggle for their services, Mistress Adele does not raise her price but offers to teach any PC wizard up to two spells from her spellbook at no charge. If the PCs press her for more, she invites them to seek a better offer elsewhere, confident that she can find someone else to help her. If the PCs request specific information about where to find the vampire, she elaborates:

"There are two ways to find him. You wait for him at night when he comes to haunt us, although that would be like the chickens going on a fox hunt. Conversely, you could search for his resting place in the swamp during the day.

"I suspect that his lair lies about ten miles east of here, just north of the new road, in a place where the mere becomes unnaturally foggy. I cannot tell you any more, for something blocks any further divination on my part."

If the PCs inquire as to how she divined the vampire's whereabouts, Starmistress Adele just sniffs and says, "We have our ways, and no doubt you wouldn't understand them even if they were explained to you."

Regarding the vampire's prior attacks, Star-sister Bernadette and Star-child Helen saw him when he killed Star-children Arabess and Brianne. Supposedly he has black hair, a black beard, and is extremely dirty, almost like he has wallowed in mud that later dried. He also carried some kind of sword and bore a shield on his back. Apparently, the vampire is kept at bay by buds of garlic, because they put garlic over all the windows and doors and he hasn't penetrated the castle interior or towers yet. (Although Academy members believe this, it is actually Datou's nature that forbids his entry; someone must invite him inside.) Bernadette and Helen can describe the wounds on Arabess and Brianne: two puncture marks about three inches apart (i.e., smaller than those seen by the PCs on the bitten workers in encounter **A**).

The heroes might wonder why Adele decided to locate her Academy in a nasty swamp full of insects, poisonous snakes, monsters, and other dangers. Her reply is simple: "We have a splendid view of the heavens here, and we can conduct our studies without harassment. Moreover, such a harsh, untempting environment is perfect for molding our Star-children into true Star-sisters." A PC who spends at least one night at the castle and makes a successful astrology NWP check realizes that the view of the stars from this location isn't as "splendid" as Adele claims.

PCs might also ask for some of the details on how the Academy drove the bullywugs from the castle. Adele and the other Academy members laugh at this question, and she states smugly, "The brutish frogmen fled rather quickly after we incinerated several of them."

Once the PCs agree to hunt down the vampire, Adele relaxes a bit and tells them that they may rest in the tower (area **2**), although they can enjoy the comfort of the main hall for meals. She asks the PCs to review the rules of the Academy and to honor them. The Academy rules are posted in every room of the castle (see handout on previous page).

Adele requires that the PCs stay out of the other areas of the castle in respect for the Academy members' privacy. Finally, she warns the PCs that every night, right before sunset, the guards raise the drawbridge and lock all doors and windows. She strongly encourages them to be inside by then. The evening meal is one hour prior to sunset.

While the PCs stay in Castle Naerytar, Adele comes down from her private chambers and periodically quizzes them on their efforts to find the vampire. Although full of advice, she does not risk herself or any of the Academy members to help the PCs, since that is why they are being paid and because she does not want to lose any more Academy members to the vampire or its minions.

A PC who announces that he watches Adele closely during the evening meal can make an Intelligence check to notice that she merely pretends to eat but actually toys with her food. If confronted, she announces that she intends to finish her meal in her room. Being a penanggalan, she does not eat real food, and when the meal is brought to her, she winds up tossing it in the moat. Adele is never present during breakfast or lunch, and the sisters say that she typically eats in her room. (Adele hides the meals in her closet and tosses them out with dinner once night has fallen.)

6. Kitchen and Storeroom. The kitchen has an oven and large fireplace. A cabinet in one corner contains fifty place settings of fine china decorated with stars, moons, and other celestial motifs (worth 1,000 gp for the set).

This is only one of two rooms with a fireplace, and it is the only fireplace used often. Star-children rotate in and out of the kitchen to cook and clean according to a roster that Star-sister Almeira maintains.

The adjoining storeroom is large, and it contains boxes and barrels of various dried and preserved foodstuffs along with a skinned deer and a few fish.

7. Starmistress Adele's Office. This office contains a plain desk, a chair, and more decorative tapestries. It is here that Adele keeps records and metes out discipline to errant Academy members. Behind one tapestry is a secret door that leads down to the dungeon level. The door is opened by tugging on a tassled rope hanging along one side of the tapestry.

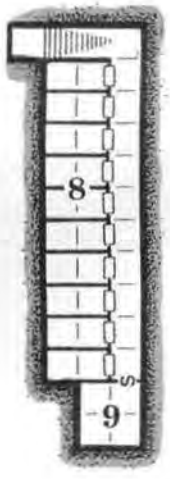
The desk contains 30 gp and 29 sp (Adele's petty cash) and a journal showing income and expenses. The income is infrequent: a few donations from parents of Academy members and a couple gifts from Stargazer

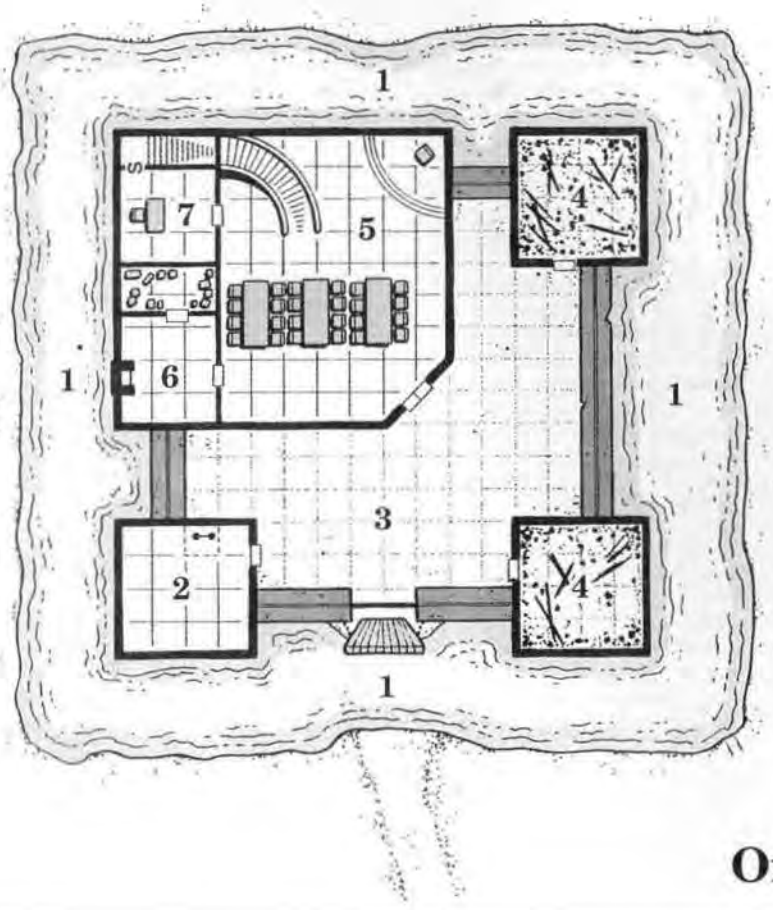
Castle Naerytar

Second Floor

Third Floor (Observatory)

Basement Level





Ground Floor

One square = 5 feet

Mistress on the Mere

Adele (penanggalan): INT high (14); AL LE; AC 2; MV 12, head detached: fly 18 (B); W12; head HD 4; hp 48, head 30; THAC0 17; head 16; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6 (bite), 1d4+7 (tail); SA blood drain, spells; SD immune to *sleep, hold,* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 11; XP 6,000; *MC14* and *Children of the Night: Vampires.*

Appearance: Mistress Adele is a sleek, 6' tall, raven-haired beauty who dresses in green robes decorated with golden stars and various astrological symbols. She has soft, deep hazel eyes, a fair complexion, and a large mouth with sensuous lips. She speaks with clipped precision, taking care to enunciate every word properly.

If her head is detached, it grows beyond twice its normal size, and two 5" sharp fangs protrude from her upper jaw. In the darkness, her black tail-like appendage glows with an eerie luminescence, and her eyes shine with a fiery red hue. Her voice gurgles with promises of unending joy once her victim becomes undead.

Background: Adele was a gifted, rising astrologer and sorceress who lived in the city of Zazzespur before she fell prey to a penanggalan. Soon after becoming undead, she learned that her ravenous appetite too often incurred quick reprisal and relentless pursuit by the forces of good. She fled to Waterdeep and quietly began a small academy to teach her skills in astrology and magic to hopeful female apprentices. This cover worked well for several years, as it provided her with a source of nourishment and protectors. When a powerful noble who lost his apprentice daughter to Adele started asking too many questions, however, she decided to find a different locale where she could conduct her affairs undisturbed.

The efforts of Sir Justin Melenikus piqued her interest, and soon she and her troupe of apprentices and bodyguards appeared at Iniarv's Tower. Mistress Adele had researched Castle Naerytar, and she volunteered to rid it of monsters. In just a few short weeks, the Academy of Stargazers, led by their powerful mistress, wiped out a tribe of bullywugs who had taken residence there and claimed it as their new home.

Adele hired workers to muck out the place and build a road from the castle to the High Road. They also delivered a large telescope that Adele had purchased in Waterdeep. With the aid of arcane scrolls and other rare materials purchased in Skullport, she transformed the inner dome of the Castle into a magical viewing sphere which she uses to view her murky domain to find victims. She does not drain the members of her Academy as they provide her with an excellent cover unless, of course, victims are scarce.

Special Abilities and Powers: The penanggalan is a special female vampire with abilities, powers, and weaknesses that differ from those of most vampires. During the day, she walks around in human form with no penalties, she has no aversions to mirrors, holy symbols, running water, garlic or other herbs, and even radiates the alignment she possessed before she became undead. At night, however, the penanggalan detaches her head from her body and flies off, looking for victims to drain. While in this form, her vampiric teeth grow and she radiates her true lawful evil alignment. Unlike other vampires, the penanggalan does not regenerate hit points each round, nor does she become gaseous when reduced to 0 hit points. She is harmed by nonmagical weapons, and clerics turn her as a wraith.

It is rare for a penanggalan to take on a party of strong adventurers because her attacks are quite limited and she is vulnerable to a well-coordinated attack. Further, she dare not be caught in her nightly form when the sun rises because the head falls to the ground, helplessly paralyzed.

Instead, the penanggalan prefers a single prey, preferably a female in her late teens to early 40's. If possible, a penanggalan preys on a female paladin above all other choices. She uses a unique *charm* ability similar to a first-level *hypnotism* spell. The victim receives a saving throw with a –3 penalty. If the victim fails, the penanggalan feeds for 1–6 hp damage and 1 point of Strength and Constitution. Attacks on subsequent nights work the same except that the victim's saving throw suffers a cumulative –1 penalty. A successful saving throw results in the penanggalan fleeing back to her lair. Meanwhile, the victim can always recognize that penanggalan, either in head or "normal" form.

The creature has other effects depending on the situation. If a person witnesses the penanggalan's head detaching, he must save vs. death magic or fall unconscious for 24 hours and remain *feebleminded* for three days. If the save succeeds, the victim is *feebleminded* until dawn. If a person sees the detached head flying, feeding, or fighting, he must save vs. spell or be overcome with *fear*.

If forced to combat, the penanggalan uses its prehensile tail as a weapon, grappling a victim for 1d4+7 hp damage due to the tail's 19 Strength.

Starmistress Adele, however, has a few features that make her unique. First, before she detaches her head, she casts *invisibility* on herself. Previously, she has cast *contingency* with *enlarge* upon her head, which triggers whenever her head detaches. This not only makes her head 140% larger than normal (and has given rise to rumors about a giant penanggalan in the Mere), but it also enables her to drain double the number of points from a victim. She wears a silver *hair brooch of superior protection* that stays with her head. This unique item gives her AC 2, +2 to all saving throws, and absorbs 100 hp of spell or magical item damage (e.g., *magic missiles, lightning bolts, fireballs,* bonuses from magical weapons, and so forth) every week.

In human form, Starmistress Adele is a 14th-level wizard. Besides the magical brooch, she has a *wand of fire* (60 charges) and a silver rod with a star attached at the end—the symbol of her office as Mistress of the Mere. It is actually a *rod of alertness*.

Spells: Adele can cast spells in human form only. Below are the spells that Mistress Adele normally memorizes. Her spell book contains an equal number of different spells. For example, the listing below shows that she has memorized five first-level spells. Her spellbook not only has those spells, but five additional first-level spells. The DM should determine what additional spells are in her spellbook.

First level: *charm person, color spray, enlarge* (previously cast), *hypnotism, magic missile*;

Second level: *ESP, hypnotic pattern, invisibility, stinking cloud, web*;

Third level: *blink, fly, lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles, vampiric touch*;

Fourth level: *charm monster, Evard's black tentacles, illusionary wall, improved invisibility, minor globe of invulnerability*;

Fifth level: *Bigby's interposing hand, monster summoning III, summon shadow, wall of iron*;

Sixth level: *contingency* (already cast), *eyebite* (sleep).

alumni. The expenses are heavy, as it requires a lot of money to maintain the place. PCs with a business background or an appropriate nonweapon proficiency/secondary skill (gambler, jeweler, scribe, appraisal, or gaming) can deduce that Adele is running the Academy in the red and should have gone broke a long time ago. This is a subtle hint to her background. Adele always robs her victims to generate revenue. (If she can't take her victim's purse away in her mouth, she returns to the scene the next day in human form and plunders the body).

None of the Star-sisters know about Castle Naerytar's precarious financial status, the secret door, or the dungeon below.

Basement Level

8. Cells. At the bottom of a long staircase are ten cells. At the end of the dark hallway stands a suit of armor—a battle horror that attacks anyone in the hallway save Adele.

Battle horror: INT high (13); AL N; AC 2; MV 12, fly 12 (E); HD 4+9; hp 35; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (halberd); SA casts two *magic missiles* every three rounds; SD healed by *magic missiles*; *blink* for one turn once/day; MR immune to *fireball, lightning bolt*, and *heat metal* as well as illusions, enchantments, and charms; SZ M; ML 20; XP 4,000; *MC Annual, Volume One*. If PCs retreat, the horror pursues them.

9. Treasure Room. This unlit hall is lined with empty cells, but at the end of the hall is a secret door. Behind a loose stone is a lever with small, fine writing on it (*explosive runes* cast by Adele). After the *runes* detonate, all magical items on the PCs glow with a cold, white radiance. If the PCs avoid or *dispel* the runes, their magical items glow as soon as they pull the lever, which opens the secret door.

The glowing effect is caused by a watchghost named Harold. He guards Adele's treasure, and the PCs' items continue to glow as long as they are within 60 feet of the treasure room. Behind the secret door is a large locked chest made of wood and reinforced with iron bands. The chest has been enchanted so that it cannot be harmed by weapons of less than +3 enchantment. Its lock is of superior quality (–30% chance to all Open Locks rolls).

As soon as the PCs move to open or check the chest, a chalky white face and hand emerges from the far wall. A whispering voice warns the heroes to stay away: "No, no, no! Don't mess with that! I'll have to kill you! It's the rules, you know!"

The voice belongs to the watchghost Harold Ketterman—one of the workers who cleaned out the castle. He disappeared after accidentally finding the secret passageway into the dungeon. The incident occurred before Adele got her battle horrors in place. After catching Harold snooping around, she imprisoned him in a cell and drained him dry, and everyone thought the other vampire took him. Recently, Adele used a scroll with the spell *create watchghost* (see *Wizard's Spell Compendium*, page 197) to bind Harold as her treasure guardian. His instructions are to kill anyone but Adele who messes with the chest.

Due to a slight error in the casting, however, Harold's ghost is resentful of Adele, so he warns anyone who thinks about fooling with the chest. If the PCs disturb the chest or attack him, Harold does his best to destroy them but does not pursue beyond the dungeon's confines. If the PCs chat with Harold in a friendly manner, they can learn a great deal of information, namely that Adele is a penanggalan (he does not call her this, but describes her as a "floating head with teeth"), that she drained his blood over a period of days, and that she somehow made him into a ghost. He regrets that he cannot let them have the treasure because he is compelled to destroy anyone but Adele who handles the chest.

There are basically three ways to claim the treasure: destroy Harold; destroy Adele (at which time Harold's spirit is released); or use alteration magic to disguise oneself as Adele. Give any PC who thinks of this last method (or any other clever scheme) a 300 XP bonus.

Harold (watchghost): INT average (9); AL LN; AC 1; MV 9, fly 9 (C); HD 7+2; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2–16; SA chill ray (12 times/day, range 90 feet; THAC0 6; Dmg 2–24 if victim fails save vs. death magic, he must also save vs. petrification or be *slowed* for 2–24 rounds); SD magical weapons deal only twice the damage of their magical bonuses (no base damage; so a +2 weapon would only inflict 4 hp damage) while ordinary weapons have no effect; passes through stone; immune to holy water and turning; immune to *charm, sleep, hold*, poison, petrification, *polymorph*, cold-based attacks, and death magic; MR 25%; SZ M; ML 20; XP 4,000.

The chest contains 86 pp, 122 gp, 208 sp, eight gems (worth 1,000 gp, 500 gp, 3 × 250 gp, 100 gp, and 2 × 50 gp respectively), and a few magical "trinkets" that Adele is saving for trade: a *wand of secret door and trap location* (22 charges), a *bag of transmuting*, a *cube of frost resistance*, and a *buckle knife*.

Second Floor

10. Star-sister Quarters. These six rooms are identical. Each contains a comfortable bed, nightstand, lamp, chamber pot, and closet. Four of them house the Star-sisters, one serves as the guest room for Stargazer Melissa, and the last is empty (available for the next Star-sister). Generally, these rooms are empty during the day, as the Academy members work in the kitchen, study, or attend classes.

Pernasia's room (in the northeast corner of the keep) has a gold pin hidden in her mattress. The pin bears a distinctive "Z" symbol. A PC who makes a successful heraldry proficiency check recognizes this symbol as the sign of the Zhentarim. (PCs who have had dealings with the Zhentarim recognize the symbol immediately.) Next to the pin is a fuzzy gray bag—a special *bag of tricks* containing nothing but carrier pigeons (12 total), each with a tube for messages. Unless trained differently, the pigeons always fly to the closest Zhentarim stronghold.

If accused of being a Zhentarim spy, Pernasia denies such allegiance, asserting that someone else must have hidden the pin in her chamber to incriminate her. More information about Pernasia's character and motives is given in "The Academy of Stargazers" sidebar (next page).

11. Star-children Quarters. These six rooms each contain two beds, two desks and chairs, two chamber pots, and two small closets. Five rooms are

The Academy of Stargazers

Mistress Adele's school, the Academy of Stargazers, is a front to cover her true nature. All members of the Academy are female—ideal prey for a penanggalan. Adele, however, exercises considerable self-control: she knows that the best cover is one that makes her an improbable suspect when forces of good start snooping for undead. Not even the Academy members (except one) know that their beloved Starmistress is a creature of darkness.

The front is all the more believable because Mistress Adele teaches her students astronomy, astrology, and magic. Those who show no potential for such subjects are sent home, and a few have died mysteriously en route. Those who demonstrate potential receive instruction from Adele and her Star-sisters. Typically, when a novice apprentice (called a Star-child) reaches 5th level, she is given a choice: to leave the academy and pursue her profession elsewhere (becoming a Stargazer affiliated with the Academy) or stay and become a higher apprentice and instructor (a Star-sister).

The life of a Star-child is onerous, filled with unenviable chores, hard discipline, and long hours of study. Star-children must curtsy to the Starmistress and Star-sisters, address them by their proper titles, and obey the rules which are posted in every room of the Academy. Star-children must take an oath upon enrollment to obey all the rules, remain chaste, and not leave unless cast out or upon reaching Stargazer status. Star-children are not permitted to leave, and parents who enroll their children in the Academy of Stargazers sign an agreement waiving their rights to remove them.

Upon reaching 5th level, Star-sisters swear allegiance to Mistress Adele as well as take an oath of chastity. They teach the majority of the classes to the Star-children and undertake missions directed by Adele. They also receive private instruction from Adele in higher magic.

Stargazers do not have to swear allegiance to the Mistress but do swear an oath that binds them to come to the aid of the Academy should it ever be endangered. Stargazers must abide by the rules whenever visiting the Academy and are encouraged to locate potential recruits and send monetary donations. Currently there are four Stargazers in the Realms (locations and identities up to the DM) and one within Castle Naerytar.

The current Academy members within Castle Naerytar include:

Star-Sisters

Almeira: AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; W7; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 17, I 15, W 11, C 10, Ch 12; ML 18; XP 1400; *ring of protection +1, dagger +2/+3 vs. shapechangers*, potion of *flying*. Spells memorized: *comprehend languages, magic missile* (×2), *spook; bind, mirror image, web; lightning bolt, protection from normal missiles; minor globe of invulnerability*.

Personality: Hard and aloof, Almeira is in her mid-30's and a shade overweight, but she has a pretty face which belies the iron discipline she metes out to the Star-children. She gives classes in first-level spell use.

Pernasia: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; W6; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 10, D 18, I 16, W 12, C 16, Ch 14; ML 18; XP 975; *ring of fire resistance, wand of magic missiles* (42 charges), *toe ring of mind shielding*.

Spells memorized: *dancing lights, detect magic, color spray* (×2); *bind, levitate; monster summoning I, Melf's minutes meteors*.

Personality: Pernasia has proven her loyalty to the Mistress on many occasions. She goes out to recruit any young females who show potential. Despite her history, Pernasia is actually a Zhentarim agent and is the only Academy member who knows Adele's true nature. Her mission is to approach Starmistress Adele when the time is right and offer her the opportunity to join the Zhentarim, who would like nothing better than a penanggalan aiding them in their quest to sow chaos across Faerûn. Pernasia might play a significant role in the adventure in two ways: first, if the PCs ruin with Adele's plans, Pernasia could assist her escape to a Zhentarim stronghold; second, if the PCs discover Pernasia's identity and capture her, she could reveal Adele's true nature and tell the PCs that the Zhentarim sent her to destroy the penanggalan and seize control of the Academy (using it as a training ground for aspiring Zhentarim mages). In this instance, Pernasia offers to help the PCs (and escapes at first opportunity). Pernasia wears a *toe ring of mind shielding* under her slipper; this prevents spells like *ESP, detect lie, know alignment*, and *detect evil* from working.

Bernadette: AL N; AC 7; MV 12; W6; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 16, I 15, W 10, C 12, Ch 16; ML 18; XP 975; *bracers of defense AC 9, wand of paralyzation* (10 charges).

Spells memorized: *color spray, charm person, magic missile* (×2); *levitate, web; fireball, protection from normal missiles*.

Personality: Bernadette was the first member of the Academy ever recruited by Adele, and she is fiercely loyal to the Starmistress. A strikingly beautiful woman, Bernadette is in her mid-50's, and often Adele consults Bernadette to get her advice about various issues. She is an exacting instructor to the Star-children and teaches second-level spells to those who can learn them.

Hendris: AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; W5; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 15, I 16, W 12, C 9, Ch 17; ML 18; XP 650; *robe of protection +3, dagger +1, ring of spell storing* (three levels of spells).

Spells memorized: *charm person, detect magic, magic missile; stinking cloud, web; fireball*. The *ring of spell storing* contains three *magic missile* spells.

occupied by Star-children, two per room, while the sixth is unoccupied. The Star-children have possessions as listed in the sidebar above. The Star-children retire at 10:00 P.M. Those on kitchen duty arise an hour before sunrise but do not venture outside while it is dark.

12. Bodyguards' Quarters. Adele's bodyguards, Shadra and Julianne, occupy this chamber. One of them is always standing guard outside Mistress Adele's door during the night. (They take four-hour shifts.) Their room is sparsely furnished.

13. Mistress Adele's Quarters. At night, the door to this chamber is guarded by either Shadra or Julianne. Adele has instructed her guards that no one may enter her room for any reason whatsoever. If the PCs do not leave immediately, the guard on duty attacks and rouses the entire castle. Should the PCs enter Adele's bedchamber through the window and poke around, the guards remain outside the room, as they are under strict orders not to enter uninvited regardless of what they hear.

> Fit for royalty, this room has a beautiful canopy bed covered with soft furs. Next to the bed is a nightstand with a lamp. A comfortable chair looks out a large window facing southeast. In the eastern wall is a huge fireplace and a nearby load of firewood. By the western wall is a large closet and a decorative suit of armor standing by its entry.

Personality: Tall and willowy, Hendris is often sent out with Pernasia to recruit new Star-children. She is the teaching assistant in Starmistress Adele's classes on astrology and astronomy. An ambitious Star-sister, Hendris aspires to become Starmistress one day and tries to impress Adele with her abilities.

Stargazers

Melissa: AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; W5; hp 18; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 13, D 18, I 16, W 11, C 16, Ch 18; ML 18; XP 650; *dagger +1*, potion of *extra-healing*.

Spells memorized: *color spray, magic missile* (×2); *bind, Melf's acid arrow; lightning bolt*.

Personality: Melissa is the most recent graduate of the Academy. Despite a foul temperament and a chaotic streak, Mistress Adele granted her this status of Stargazer but required that she remain in Castle Naerytar until the vampire threat was eliminated. This means adhering to the Academy rules while she remains there—an arduous task, to be sure. Melissa actively encourages the PCs to get on with slaying the vampire so she can escape the Academy's strict environment. She warms to any male PC with a high Charisma and/or elven blood but does not even give him a peck on the cheek until the vampire is laid to rest.

Star-Children

Only minimal statistics are given for the Star-children. They generally carry offensive spells (e.g. *magic missile, Melf's acid arrow*) in case the vampire sneaks inside.

Basheeba: AL LG, AC 7; W4; hp 13; XP 175. Unfailingly loyal to the Academy and Starmistress Adele, Basheeba is so trustworthy that Mistress Adele has allowed her to leave Castle Naerytar with one of the Star-sisters on other missions so that she might acquire more "worldly" experience.

Carnice: AL LN, AC 8; W3; hp 9; XP 120. A fast riser, Carnice has attained 3rd level after being in the Academy for only a year. The daughter of a clerical family, she was already accustomed to the rigors of the Academy and fit in perfectly.

Danielle: AL CN; AC 9; W3; hp 9; XP 120. Danielle is detailed to the kitchen for cooking and scrubbing duties for the next 30 days. She was caught flirting with one of the workers, and she is now paying the price. Danielle chafes under the rules and can't wait for the day she becomes a Stargazer so she may leave.

Emily: AL N; AC 10; W2; hp 6; XP 65. Emily is the daughter of a wealthy and prominent Waterdhavian family. Initially, she had a difficult time with the discipline, lack of personal servants, and a rigorous class/study schedule, but she has settled in.

Zorien: AL N; AC 9; W2; hp 7; XP 65. Zorien was bought by Pernasia on a slave auction block in Skullport. She is grateful for her rescue and is passionately loyal to Pernasia. Eventually, Pernasia hopes to recruit her into the ranks of the Zhentarim.

Kristal: AL LN; AC 8; W2; hp 6; XP 175. Originally a rebellious lass, Kristal's spirit was broken by some rather harsh discipline meted out by the heavy handed Star-sister Almeira. Kristal is quiet and reserved, and there is a 20% chance that any time she tries to cast a spell, it fizzles due to some somatic or verbal error.

Helen: AL N; AC 10; W1; hp 3; XP 35. Helen is a novitiate from Neverwinter and a daughter of a clockmaker who hopes that if his daughter learns magic, she can help him make magical timepieces. She is horribly homesick and grieves for her friend Arabess, a Star-child who fell prey to Datou.

Hirakkala: AL CG; AC 10; 0-level; hp 5; XP 7. A Calishite recruit, Hirakkala is good friends with Zorien. Daughter of a fortune teller, she shows a wonderful propensity for astrology and astronomy but can't learn a simple cantrip. Another two months of this, and Starmistress Adele will send her home (no doubt killing her en route).

Rhoda: AL CN; AC 10; W2; hp 7; XP 65. A good natured girl from Baldur's Gate, Rhoda learns magic very well, but has a real problem with pulling pranks on her fellow Star-children and an occasional one on a Star-sister. She keeps these pranks simple and harmless.

Rizmet: AL CN; AC 8; W1; hp 5; XP 35. An elf, Rizmet was pulled out of an orphanage on one of Pernasia's recruiting trips. She loves the company of the other Star-children but has a hard time staying focused on studies due to her chaotic nature. As a result, she spends a lot of time peeling potatoes and washing dishes.

Academy Guards

The two academy guards, Shadra and Julianne, have served Adele for ten years, and they are fiercely loyal to her, largely due to the *charm person* spells she routinely casts on them. Shadra has prematurely gray hair with matching eyes. Julianne has carrot-red hair and brown eyes. Both are stocky and muscular, and they get along quite well with each other. They defend Adele to the death unless confronted with the Starmistress' true nature; even then, they cannot attack Adele so long as they are *charmed*.

Shadra: AL N; AC 2; MV 12; F5; hp 45; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with broadsword; S 17, D 15, I 10, W 12, C 16, Ch 14; ML 18; XP 650; chain mail, *shield +2, broadsword +1*, large composite bow with 12 normal sheaf arrows and eight *sheaf arrows +2*, potion of *extra-healing*.

Julianne: AL N; AC 1; MV 12; F4; hp 30; THAC0 17 (base); #AT by weapon type; Dmg by weapon type; SA specialized with spear; S 18, D 16, I 11, W 13, C 15, Ch 15; ML 18; XP 975; *banded mail +1, spear +3*, heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, dagger, potion of *extra-healing*.

The furs on the bed are ermine and mink (worth 1,000 gp total). The fireplace is spotless, and its damper is crammed with garlic buds. The nightstand, lamp, and chair are of fine quality but otherwise ordinary.

The window is locked during the day and has wreaths of garlic and wolfsbane hanging outside. At night, it is wide open. Adele leaves from here whenever she goes out on a blood hunt. PCs in the guard tower (area **2**) who open the tower windows and look out toward the keep have a 30% chance of noticing that this window is open (automatic success if a PC states specifically that he is looking at this window). Note that when Adele flies out, she is *invisible*, but when she returns she is visible.

Luxurious clothes fill the closet, including Adele's gold-embroidered robes of office.

Next to the closet is a secret room hidden behind an *illusionary wall* spell. Standing in front of the illusory barrier is a suit of armor—actually another battle horror (same statistics as the one in area **8**) under orders to kill anyone but Adele who tries to enter the secret room. In one corner of the secret room is a small chest with a high quality lock (–20% chance to Open Locks rolls) that has a poison needle (Type M). Inside is Adele's spellbook.

Next to the book is a small bottle with an absorbent swab built into its top. *Detect poison* reveals that the liquid in the bottle is poisonous (Type M). Adele has coated the entire cover of the book (save vs. poison or suffer an immediate 20 hp damage after 1–4 rounds). Adele, being undead, is not affected by the poison. There is

The ghastly penanggalan confronts her latest victim.

enough poison in the jar for three more applications.

If the PCs come here after 10:00 P.M. and before sunrise, they might find Adele's *invisible* headless body slumped in one corner. (She casts *invisibility* on herself before detaching her head.) If PCs dispel the *invisibility*, they see her shriveled organs through the hole in her neck; heroes witnessing this grisly sight must save vs. spell at +2 or succumb to *fear* (as the spell). As soon as the PCs come within 5 feet of her body, Adele senses their presence and immediately returns to Castle Naerytar to destroy the trespassers. Smart PCs might destroy the body (any destructive means will do), but Adele has other options. If possible, she returns to her bedroom (breaking through the glass windows if closed) and from behind the closed door orders her guards to roust the entire Academy to destroy the PCs, stating that they have fallen in league with the vampire. She also states that she is ill and may not be disturbed. During the day she hides in her closet (sunlight totally paralyzes her while in head form) and trusts that the Academy members will protect her. At night she hunts down the PCs. If the Academy members destroy the PCs, Adele continues the ruse that she is ill, not letting anyone in to help her, and then she murders every member of the Academy, turning them into penanggalans willing to guard her.

Battle horror: INT high (13); AL N; AC 2; MV 12, fly 12 (E); HD 4+9; hp 30; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (halberd); SA casts two *magic missiles* every three rounds; SD healed by *magic missiles*; *blink* for one turn once/day; MR immune to *fireball, lightning bolt*, and *heat metal* as well as illusions, enchantments, and charms; SZ M; ML 20; XP 4,000; *MC Annual, Volume One*. If PCs retreat, the horror does not pursue them beyond this room.

Third Floor

14. The Observatory.

> This huge chamber is a hemispheric stone dome reaching a 45' apex. Desks and chairs surround a 20' long mounted metal tube mounted on a large circular metal stand. Attached to the bottom of the tube is a box with various dials and levers.

Classes occur here during the day. The desks have fold-back tops and contain bottles of ink, goose quill pens, books, and paper. Each desk bears a wooden name plate attached to the top. The Star-children store their spellbooks in the desks, while all desks have a journal recording various readings of the stars, planets, and other celestial bodies. Off to one side are several enormous cabinets, each one filled with various components needed for casting spells (see *PHB* for details for each spell).

Among the most recent entries in the journals of Star-sisters Almeira, Pernasia, Bernadette, and Hendris are disjointed notes regarding an imminent celestial phenomenon known as the "Eye of Myrkul." Anyone who pieces together the Star-sisters' journal entries can determine that this phenomenon apparently involves the passage of a new moon through the center of a circle of seven stars and that it should happen sometime around the new moon in the next few months. When the baleful orb of the Lord of Bones glares down on the lands of Faerûn, legend holds that the power of Selûne is at its weakest and that the power of Myrkul is ascendant upon the land. In the last entry of Hendris's journal is the inciteful observation that this is the first reoccurrence of the phenomenon since the death of the Lord of Bones in Waterdeep during the Time of Troubles.

It is also possible to determine from the journal entries that Stargazer Melissa learned of this imminent phenomenon while visiting with an astronomer in Suzail (who is not named) and that she has been

leading the Star-sisters in their observations of the moon as it approaches the heralded moment in an attempt to date it more precisely. After a thorough study of the notes and access to the observatory telescope, any PC who makes a successful astrology or astronomy check can determine that the Eye of Myrkul will most likely appear within a few days of the next new moon. (The exact timing of the celestial phenomenon is left to the DM, but it should unfold during the events of the final adventure in the *Mere of Dead Men* series, appearing in Issue #73.)

Even if the PCs do not discover the journal entries as noted above, they might be aware of impending events thanks to a vision they received in the previous adventure of this series, "Dreadful Vestiges" (Issue #71). Regardless of how the PCs have learned of the imminent appearance of the Eye of Myrkul, they might gain some insight into its implications by discussing it with members of the Stargazer Academy.

The Star-children have been engaged in studies and observations of various minor celestial phenomena and are only peripherally aware of what the Star-sisters have learned, as outlined in the discussions of the journals above. The Star-sisters and the Starmistress have given the phenomenon some amount of study but have found the timing of the event difficult to predict. The senior members of the Stargazer Academy can relate a series of legends associated with the phenomenon but give credence to none of them. (The DM is encouraged to be as wildly inventive as possible, and possibly even slightly truthful with regards to historical events in far-off locales. However, none of the stories related have any relevance to the imminent events that shall sweep the Mere of Dead Men as revealed in "Eye of Myrkul" in Issue #73.) If questioned, Hendris might share her particular insight, as noted above. It is important to note that none of the members of the Academy of Stargazers is particularly concerned with the imminence of this celestial phenomenon. As should be obvious from an examination of their journals, there are hundreds of celestial events per year to which various cultures ascribe widely varying meanings. The Eye of Myrkul is simply one of many such events, and not even a prominent one.

As soon as it is dark outside, the chamber's magic activates, causing the domed roof to become transparent (from the outside it still appears to be stone), providing starlight illumination. The Academy members note positions of the heavenly bodies and take turns looking through the enormous telescope at the night sky. This lasts until 10:00 P.M. when the Academy members retire.

The telescope is actually an artifact called the Farseer of Illusk, implying that it came from one of the ancient civilizations named Illusk (of which there were probably at least two) that preceded Luskan, City of Sails. (See *Volo's Guide to the North*, the *Netheril* boxed set, and the timeline in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set.) Adele has a key that opens the metal box to expose more buttons and levers. After manipulating them in an exact sequence, she can look through the telescope to view anywhere in the surrounding area for a 50-mile radius, just as if it were broad daylight. (Note that Iniarv's Tower is hidden behind natural rises in the landscape and cannot be seen.)

Although it may point to the sky, the Farseer of Illusk actually acts as a *wizard eye* looking down from below, and Adele can move the telescope around to see various places. Adele uses the artifact to locate travelers on the High Road to the east. When she finds her prey for the night, she goes to her bedroom, casts *invisibility* on herself, and opens the windows. After entering her closet, she detaches her head which *enlarges* (per her *contingency* spell). She then flies out to partake in the evening's blood feast.

PCs who tinker with the telescope can use the exposed levers and dials to move the Farseer of Illusk around and focus it on the heavenly bodies, but determining its magical properties is a different matter. Finding the secret compartment's keyhole is the same as finding a secret door. Opening it is the same chance as opening a lock (or *knock* would work). Bashing it open destroys the fine gears, rendering the telescope inoperable. Fiddling with the secret levers and dials must be done in an exact sequence, and each PC has a 10% chance of discovering it out by accident (only one try per PC). *Identify* spells have a good chance of discovering the sequence—10% per level of the caster—but a roll of 96–00 triggers a defense mechanism within the artifact: Mistress Adele becomes aware that someone is fooling with her prized possession, and she investigates immediately. The next day she tells her followers that the PCs have fallen in league with the vampire, and when they enter the dining area for their next meal, each member of the Academy attacks the PCs with every spell at her disposal.

Once the PCs determine how the device works, they can look around and locate nests of monsters throughout the mere. They also observe the blanket of fog that shrouds the area with a five-mile radius to the east of Castle Naerytar. This is the domain of Datou, the swamp druid. Clever PCs might even focus the view on Castle Naerytar itself, see Datou skulking around, and plan an ambush for him. The device does not allow the PCs to penetrate the fog enshrouding Datou's domain.

Part III: Searching For Datou

Datou's corner of the mere is an eerie, dismal place. The smelly water reaches the hips of medium-sized PCs, hides treacherous quicksand pits, and houses biting insects that harass the heroes incessantly. PCs might think of traveling through the swamp on some sort of raft or flat-bottomed boat. Mistress Adele has no such vessel, but PCs may use the old tools in Castle Naerytar (area **4**) to fashion one. A PC who has the shipwright secondary skill can fashion a good boat for negotiating the swamp; otherwise the heroes can make a raft.

Visibility within Datou's domain is limited to 30 feet due to the foggy haze that shrouds the area. The fog is 50' high, and flying PCs have a hard time discerning anything below. Any PC flying above Datou's lair (see below) has a 5% chance of spotting it. Those who cast spells such as *gust of wind* or *control winds* might blow some fog away temporarily (see *PHB* for areas of effect and duration), but inevitably it creeps back in.

The Swamp Vampire

Datou (swamp druid vampire): INT high (14); AL NE; AC 2; MV 12, fly 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 67; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5–10; SA energy drain, spells; SD +1 or better magic weapons to hit; immune to *sleep, hold, charm,* and any plant or animal-based spells; regenerates 1 hp/round; SZ M; ML 16; XP 13,000; *MM*/355 (modified).

Appearance: Datou appears as a barefoot and muddy man in his mid-30's. He has coal-black hair and a rough beard, and his eyes are bright green and glow when exposed to light. He is dressed in ragged brown pants and a leather jerkin. At his side hangs a *scimitar* +2, and on his back is a wooden *shield* +2. He wears a *ring of Myrkul* (see sidebar on page 76) on the middle finger of his left hand.

Background: Datou was raised by human druidic parents who tended to the needs of a bullywug tribe that lived in the Mere. When he grew up, he followed their tradition of safeguarding the bullywugs and keeping the swamp free from civilized intrusions. When a tribe of fierce hobgoblins invaded the swamp, Datou fought at the bullywugs' side. After a horrific battle, the hobgoblins captured the young druid. After breaking his arms and tying them to logs, the hobgoblins tossed him into a pit of quicksand and laughed as he screamed and sank beneath the ooze.

As he slipped beneath the surface, Datou prayed for divine intervention so he could avenge himself. Eldath denied the druid his vengeance, but Myrkul heard this prayer and granted it ... after a fashion. Datou became a vampire of the swamp and the pit of quicksand became his grave. Once the sun set, Datou ripped free of his bonds and rose to the surface, thirsty for the sweet bloody taste of revenge. By dawn, few hobgoblins had escaped his terrible fury.

Datou still retained most of his druidic powers and abilities, and although he was now undead, he kept his motivation to keep the swamp cleansed of civilization's intrusions. The difference is that before his change, he would have first tried to persuade visitors to stay away. Now he gives them no choice: they die.

Special Abilities and Powers: Datou may only be harmed by magical weapons of +1 or better enchantment and, like other vampires, he has an 18/76 Strength, giving him +2 to hit and +4 on damage.

His druidic background does not afford him the normal *charm* abilities of a vampire. Generally, animals shun the undead, but they obey Datou out of wild fear. Datou may *speak with animals and plants* at will. Garlic, wolfsbane, and other herbs have no effect on the swamp vampire.

Like a druid, he may *shapechange* three times a day into the forms of a praying mantis (#AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/1–10), giant constrictor snake (#AT 2; Dmg 1–4/2–8), or giant raven (#AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 and 10% chance of pecking out an eye). His bite, whether in human or shapechanged form, drains one level from the victim permanently unless a saving throw vs. death magic succeeds.

Another druidic power Datou retains is the ability to *pass without trace* through the swamp; this includes the ability to walk over quicksand and swamp water. Animal and plant-based spells (e.g., *entangle*) do not affect him, and he receives a saving throw vs. spell against any spell cast by another druid. In addition to his normal spells (see below), Datou may cast *insect plague* once per day and may *animate dead* at will.

If reduced to 0 hit points, Datou reverts to a *gaseous form*—a nauseating yellowish vapor that takes the form of a 50' × 50' × 10' cloud. Anyone within the vapor's reach is affected as if caught in a *stinking cloud* spell. The gas drifts quickly (MV 12) above the trees and eventually finds its way back to the quicksand pit that serves as Datou's grave. There his corpse lies, regenerating until the following sunset when it rises again with all powers restored.

Datou has one peculiar weakness: while he may go anywhere in the swamp without penalty, he is unable to enter any man-made structure, even a tent, unless someone inside invites him.

Datou despises the penanggalan Adele and wants to destroy her. However, during the day she is confined to her castle, and at night she flies about invisibly.

Datou may be laid to rest through the usual method of staking him through the heart, removing his head, and filling his mouth with holy wafers. The only unusual requirement is that the stake must be cut within the previous hour. Another way is to sanctify his grave site requires the sacrifice of no less than ten vials of holy water into the quicksand, followed by the successful casting of a *dispel evil* spell.

Spells: Datou has the ability to cast spells as a 7th-level druid with an 18 Wisdom. His spells are:

First level: *bestow curse, detect good, entangle* (×2), *faerie fire.*

Second level: *badberry, barkskin* (×2), *heat metal, trip.*

Third level: *protection from fire, spike growth, summon insects* (always getting flying insects).

Fourth Level: *giant insect, sticks to snakes.*

In life, Datou was a swamp druid with tremendous influence over his environs. Within his domain, usual information-gathering techniques such as *animal friendship, speak with animals, speak with plants,* and *charm mammal* simply do not work. Neither flora nor fauna yields information, fearing that Datou might exact some terrible vengeance. Such techniques only have limited success in the swamp surrounding Datou's area; there animals (or plants) tremble fearfully and refer to "the swamp of the great master."

Numerous nasty events can occur in the swamp. The DM should fortify the impression that the swamp is a rotten, miserable place to rest, recuperate, and relearn spells (5% chance per day of contracting a disease). Heroes cannot recover hit points without magical aid unless they find a comfortable, protected environment (such as those created by a *rope trick* or *Leomund's tiny hut* spell).

The following encounters are designed to give the DM choices of nasty things to inflict on the PCs about once every two hours, with at least three events occurring before the PCs reach Datou's clearing:

1. Quicksand Pit. The lead PC suddenly sinks into the mire. If the PC makes a successful Dexterity check, he manages to grab something but continues to sink at the rate of six inches per round; failure means that he sinks one foot per round. Other PCs may use a rope, staff, or similar instrument to rescue the mired PC, but it requires at least 40 Strength points to pull the PC free. Anyone who goes under must hold his breath to avoid drowning (see *PHB* for rules on holding one's breath).

2. Snakes. Fifteen poisonous snakes of different species attack the PCs—swimming up to them, falling from the trees, striking from nearby branches, and so forth.

Poisonous snakes (15): INT animal (1); AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison bite (onset time 1d6 rounds;

Shambling mounds hold brave heroes at bay as the swamp vampire Datou assumes a monstrous form.

save vs. poison or suffer 3d4 hp damage); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

3. Zombies.

> The dreary silence is broken by noises up ahead, as if something were skulking through the trees and water. Barely visible in the fog, a humanoid creature shambles toward you. A rounded head with bulbous eyes juts out of the water next to it. You hear more splashes and more movement coming from what seems like all directions, and at this point you can make out the details. A dozen dirt-encrusted hobgoblins move toward you, axes hanging lazily at their sides. They are joined by bloated, froglike bipeds that bear terrible wounds. As they slowly hop and splash their way toward you, they stare with vacant, milky eyes—that is, the ones who still have eyes.

When Datou became a vampire, he *animated* dead bullywugs and hobgoblins (see the sidebar on Datou) to patrol and guard his domain. They attack and capture any two-legged beings they encounter. The undead bullywugs have retained their hopping ability (+1 to hit), but they still have initiative penalties like other zombie monsters.

Three rounds after the PCs engage the zombies, a huge bullywug monster zombie rises from the swamp and joins in the attack. This creature stands 9' tall and is too heavy and sluggish to hop like its smaller kin.

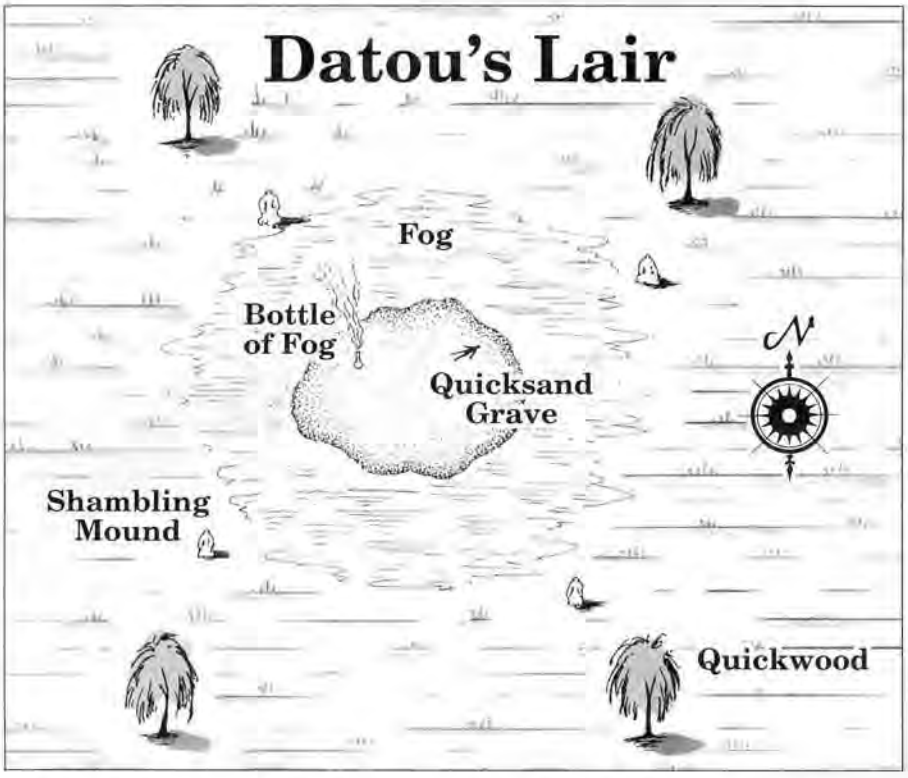
Bullywug monster zombie: INT non (0); AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 34; THAC0 15; Dmg 4–16; SD turned as a wraith in Datou's domain; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* death magic, poisons, and cold-based spells; SZ L; ML 20; XP 650; *MM*/373 (variant).

Bullywug zombies (12): INT non (0); AC 9; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 17; Dmg 1–8; SA hop (+1 to hit); SD turned as ghasts in Datou's domain; immunities as above; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/373.

Hobgoblin zombies (12): INT non (0); AC 8; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; Dmg 1–8; SD turned as ghasts; immunities as above; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/373.

The hobgoblin zombies each have 2d8 gp and (10% chance) a small gem (value 50 gp). The bullywug zombies bear horrific wounds from their defeat at the hands of the hobgoblins. The hobgoblins have fewer wounds, but each bears distinct puncture wounds in the neck—the result of Datou's revenge. All zombies carry thick vines to bind prisoners. They bring captives to Datou's clearing and dump them on the ground for the vampire to drain when night falls.

4. Giant Leeches. A group of giant leeches attacks the PCs. If the heroes fail a surprise check at –2, they do not detect the leeches until the third round of combat when the loss of hit points is apparent and movement in



the water is hampered by the large bloodsuckers. PCs in a boat or raft avoid this encounter and have a 10% chance of spotting the leeches in the murky waters.

Giant leeches (12): INT non (0); AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 4 (×3), 3 (×3), 2 (×3), 1 (×3); hp 26 (×3), 22 (×3), 14 (×3), 7 (×3); THAC0 17 (3–4 HD) or 19 (1–2 HD); Dmg 1–4; SA drain blood; 50% chance of causing disease; SZ S–M; ML 7; XP 270 (4-HD), 175 (3-HD), 120 (2-HD), 65 (1-HD); *MM*/219.

5. Eblis Blind.

> The silence is broken by a whispered message: "The hollow tree to your right is where the evil one now rests unguarded." Looking to your right, you indeed see an old tree with a 2' wide opening about three feet up, and the tree is surrounded by tall marsh grass. A 3' wide path leads to the tree, and the tree's upper branches have fallen off.

Hiding in the marsh grass is a community of evil, hungry eblis, happily following Datou's orders to ambush anyone who comes looking for him. The eblis' coloration blends nicely with the marsh grass. The community leader uses its *whispering wind* spell to lure intruders onto the path. Once the PCs are on the path, the eblis burst out of the grass (–3 to surprise rolls) and attack.

Eblis (12): INT very (12); AL NE; AC 3; MV 12, fly 12 (C); HD 4+4; hp 36, 30 (×4), 27 (×3), 26, 24 (×3); THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1–4 (×4); SA 36-hp eblis can cast *blur*, *whispering wind*, and *hypnotic pattern* each once/day; SD +1 to saves and –1 damage per die vs. fire-based attacks; SZ M; ML 16 (due to living in Datou's domain); XP 1,400 (spell user), 650 (×11); *MM*/27. Unlike other eblis, these creatures may not be bribed with gems or anything else.

Once the evil birds are dealt with, a ranger or PC who makes a successful animal lore proficiency check spots another island a short distance away. On it are the eblis huts and piles of bones, and in one hut are 15 gems (worth 3,000 gp total)—prizes taken from other victims.

6. Ravens. Silence is broken when a single raven caws loudly and flies away. This raven scout fetches the rest of his flock. One turn later, the PCs are attacked by the frenzied ravens. The swarming ravens receive a +2 bonus to attack rolls, spellcasters must roll make Wisdom roll to cast spells, and all PCs suffer a –2 penalty to THAC0. This is an excellent encounter for flying PCs.

Ravens (32): INT animal (1); AC 8; MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA eye peck (10% chance per attack of blinding an eye); SD never surprised; SZ T; ML 14; XP 15; *MM*/27 (bird).

Datou's Lair

Datou conceals his quicksand grave on a small island in the swamp. It looks like a cluster of cypress trees and other swamp vegetation—the result of a *hallucinatory forest* spell. Before the PCs see it, however, the following happens:

> Visibility has dropped as the thick fog seems to have closed in around you. At the very most, you can see only 15 feet away. Suddenly you hear a rhythmic, hollow pounding somewhat like a drum. The drumming emanates from somewhere close by, although you cannot be sure of the distance.

The scale of the adjacent map is approximately 100 feet per inch. Around the island are four quickwood trees that resemble cypresses. When the PCs move within 120 feet of one, it makes a hollow, drumming noise that alerts the nearest shambling mound. The shambling mound lazily moves toward the PCs with only a portion of its body above water; it looks like a bush or drifting vegetation typical of the swamp.

When the PCs come within 90 feet of a quickwood tree, it immediately sends its roots out to seize and hold them while the shambling mounds close to attack. As soon as a PC falls unconscious, the monsters move on to other PCs as Datou ordered them to hold all prisoners until he rises at sunset. Neither the quickwoods nor the shambling mounds make morale checks until the PCs dispose of the vampire Datou.

Quickwoods (4): INT very (11); AC 5; MV 1 (roots 3); HD 8; hp 45, 42, 35, 31; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3–12; SA roots; SD absorbs spells to radiate

fear in 10' radius per spell level absorbed (save vs. spell negates this effect); immune to fire, lightning, poison, and spells that do not affect plants; ML 16; SZ H (25' high); XP 5,000; *MM*/293.

Shambling mounds (4): INT low (5); AC 0; MV 6; HD 8; hp 42, 40, 33, 32; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2–16/2–16; SA –3 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls, suffocation; SD reduced damage from weapons; immune to fire; half or no damage from cold; lightning makes shambling mound grow; totally heals after 12 hours of rest; ML 18; SZ L (8' tall); XP 6,000; *MM*/293.

In one of the quickwoods (determined randomly), the PCs may find a diary, quill pen, and bottle of ink. It belongs to Datou and is quite lengthy, revealing his history (see sidebar on page 72). It recounts his frustration in getting rid of Adele, calls her an abomination, and remarks that "there is only enough blood in my domain for one of us!"

Datou's resting place is a quicksand pit hidden by a *hallucinatory forest* of cypress trees. Druid PCs are entitled to an Intelligence check to see through the illusion, spotting the quicksand. PCs without druids might receive a clue by casting *detect magic* on the "forest." Otherwise, a successful *dispel magic* (against 7th level) removes the *hallucinatory forest* and reveals a thick layer of fog over the quicksand. Floating just below the surface of the quicksand is an open *bottle of fog* that works similarly to an *eversmoking bottle*. The fog spreads for miles; stoppering the bottle causes the fog around Datou's island to dissipate in 1d4+1 turns.

PCs who blunder into the grove fall into the quicksand. A PC is entitled to a Dexterity check to grab a real branch near the edge of the pit. (A PC who reaches for one of the illusory tree branches is not entitled to a roll.) A failed check indicates that the PC sinks three feet down and continues to sink at the rate of 1' per round. Other PCs have to roll for surprise when this occurs, and if surprised, they may not help the victim until the second round. Pulling the PC free of three or more feet of quicksand requires a combined Strength of 45.

Datou is fully active while under the quicksand. He senses any living creature falling into his grave, and he rises just high enough to sink his fangs into the victim's calf at the end of the second round. Once this occurs, rescuers need a combined Strength of 56 to pull the PC free. PCs may use other clever means to help free their comrade, such as *feather fall* (stops the PC from sinking), *levitate* (allows the caster to add twice his Strength to any checks), or *fly* (allows the victim to add his Strength to the total). But each round that the victim remains in the quicksand held by Datou, the vampire drains his blood as well as one energy level if a save vs. paralysis fails.

If a victim is pulled free, the PCs briefly spot Datou as he releases his toothy grip the moment he reaches the quicksand pit's surface. Daylight annoys him (–3 to attack rolls), but the dense fog protects him from the sun's harmful rays. If exposed to direct sunlight, he suffers 2–12 hp damage each round. Under no circumstances does Datou emerge from the quicksand until nightfall.

PCs have a few ways to deal with Datou. They might wait for nightfall and do battle then, or they might sanctify the quicksand grave.

At night, Datou rises from his murky grave with all of his powers and any previously lost hit points restored. Reducing Datou to 0 hp causes him to assume gaseous form and sink back down into the quicksand, whereupon he resumes his human shape after 1d6 hours. It is then an easy matter for a water-breathing PC to stake him, but the stake must be freshly cut within an hour of the event.

Sanctifying the gravesite during the day is both easier and safer. A PC making a successful religion check may determine that this requires a priest to pour at least ten vials of holy water into the quicksand and cast a *dispel evil* upon the site. When this happens, read the following:

> As you finish your ceremony, the quicksand churns like a boiling cauldron. Amid the popping of noxious bubbles, you hear a gurgling voice: "Thank you, friends, for releasing me from my vampirism. I ask that you also rid my beloved swamp of the so-called Starmistress of Castle Naerytar. Her thirst for blood is eternal. As long as she lives, death will always plague the Mere." Then, all is suddenly quiet.

PCs exploring Datou's quicksand pit require water breathing ability. Datou's body disappears once his spirit is released, but his personal items remain (see "The Swamp Vampire" sidebar).

Part IV: The Lady Awaits

By now the PCs should deduce that Starmistress Adele is not what she appears to be. The clues include:

- Datou's declaration at the time of death or his secret diary.
- Watchghost Harold's tale (see "Part II: Castle Naerytar," area **9**)
- Starmistress Adele's open window (area **10**) at night. Furthermore, the PCs might see her tossing her meals out into the moat (see area **5**), the windows mysteriously opening just before she detaches her head and flies out invisibly, or the gigantic penanggalan head returning after feeding on a victim.
- Exploration of Adele's bedroom and closet, and finding Adele's headless body (area **10**).
- The size difference between the fang marks left by Datou and those left by Adele. (Adele's are larger, as the PCs may have seen on Roni, the worker in encounter **A**).
- The questionable cash flow of Castle Naerytar (area **7**).
- The fact that Starmistress Adele keeps battle horrors around.
- If an animal companion or familiar comes near Adele, it usually barks, growls, howls, chirps, or whinnies out of fear, realizing that something is not right about her.
- Her secretive nature, not allowing the PCs into the Castle proper except the dining area to eat, and not allowing animals inside.
- Adele's inaccurate statement that the Mere is a good place for viewing the heavens.
- A PC observing that Adele never really eats or drinks during a meal.
- Getting Pernasia, the Zhentarim agent, to blurt out the information on Adele's true nature in exchange for mercy (assuming the PCs discover Pernasia's affiliation).

New Magical Item

Ring of Myrkul

The *rings of Myrkul*, relatively few in number, were created and worn by Myrkulyte priests before the Time of Troubles. When Myrkul perished atop Blackstaff Tower in Waterdeep, his secret temple in the heart of the Mere sank into the swamp. A number of Myrkulytes fled the sunken temple and died, giving up their lives—and their magical rings—to the monstrous denizens of the Mere.

The *rings of Myrkul*—gold bands painted black and adorned with the white skull symbol of Myrkul—glow faintly in the presence of a *detect evil* spell. The rings allowed the Myrkulyte priests to identify one another. More importantly, the rings served as keys, enabling the priests to enter their temple without incurring the wrath of many of its guardians.

Anyone wearing a *ring of Myrkul* is granted the ability to *walk among the dead*. All mindless undead and intelligent undead with fewer than 6 HD do not attack the ring's wearer unless the wearer attacks them first. Moreover, the wearer can cast *chill touch* spell 3/day and *ghoul touch* 1/day. Prior to the Time of Troubles, if the ring wearer was a Myrkulyte priest, he could invoke a number of other effects, but these greater necromantic powers vanished when Myrkul died.

Several *rings of Myrkul* lost in the swamp have since been found. Evil, intelligent creatures are drawn to the rings as if by the eighth-level *sympathy* spell (range 30 yards).

Datou, the swamp vampire, wears a *ring of Myrkul* that he found in the swamp farther west. The importance of this ring becomes apparent in the last adventure in the *Mere of Dead Men* series.

XP Value: 250 **GP Value:** 1,000

The PCs can deal with Adele in one of many ways. An outright assault on Castle Naerytar would present quite a challenge, since the PCs are pitted against two fierce warriors, several wizards, and a penanggalan with spellcasting ability.

If the PCs have not discovered Adele's true nature, they may return to Castle Naerytar bearing news of their success. The Academy greets the news of the vampire's demise with delight.

Stargazer Melissa is especially overjoyed when she learns of the PCs' success, since she can now leave Castle Naerytar. (See "The Academy of Stargazers" sidebar for details.) She asks the PCs to escort her to Iniarv's Tower and shows a romantic interest in any handsome male PC. This makes Adele furious, and PCs might observe her glaring fiercely.

After the PCs leave, Adele locates their camp with the Farseer of Illusk, casts *invisibility* on herself, detaches her head, and flies off in search of blood. When she reaches the PCs, Adele drains Melissa after *hypnotizing* her; by morning, Melissa is quite pale and weak. On her neck are the same wide fang marks that Roni bore. On the following night, Adele strikes again. By this time, the PCs should figure out that not all the vampires are quite done with and should be highly suspicious of Adele.

When the PCs move against Adele, Sir Justin Melenikus does not spare any assistance beyond protecting Melissa. He encourages the PCs to infiltrate Castle Naerytar and destroy the penanggalan without harming any innocent or *charmed* Academy members.

When Adele is finally destroyed, all the surviving Academy members are shocked at the revelation of her true nature, and they disband. They ask the PCs to escort them to Leilon or Iniarv's Tower. They also ask the PCs whether they can spare any funds to help them reach Waterdeep. Perhaps one of the Star-children offers to accompany the party wizard as a henchman; that avenue is open for the DM to explore further.

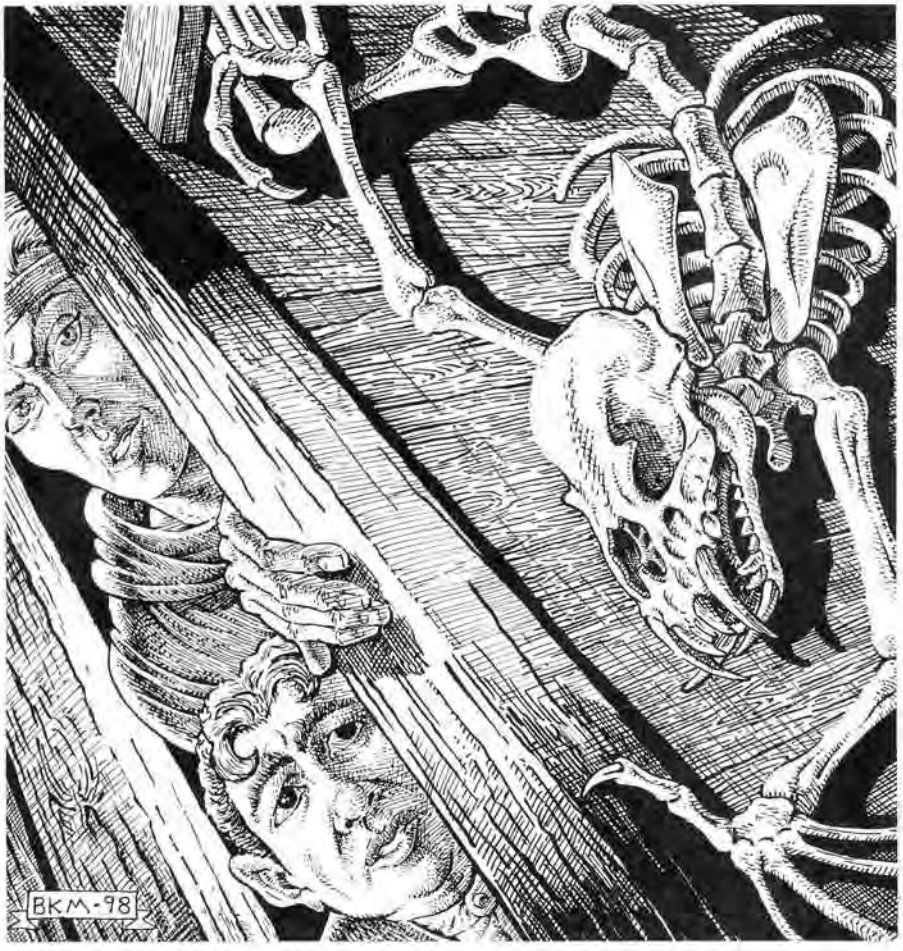
That leaves Castle Naerytar for the taking, although it is questionable whether the PCs want to hold on to it. The road needs additional repairs (1,000 gp worth), and the area around the castle lacks natural resources (and firm ground) to support a village, farms, and the like. Even if the PCs don't want to keep it, they might still use it as a temporary base of operations for further forays into the Mere of Dead Men.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs defeat both vampires, Lord Justin pays double the promised reward. His clerics also cast *raise dead* on any slain PCs. Defeating both vampires earns a story award of 15,000 XP plus additional experience for defeated or slain monsters. If the PCs figured out that Starmistress Adele was a penanggalan before Datou's dying speech (that is, without the DM hitting them over the head with clues), the DM might award an additional 10% story award bonus.

Finally, word of the PCs' heroism spreads quickly throughout Leilon and Waterdeep. Festhalls and inns soon resound with ballads and epic poems recounting the PCs' exploits in the Mere. Becoming well-known heroes might have some distinct disadvantages, particularly if the heroes meddled in the affairs of the Zhentarim by exposing or slaying their spy, Pernasia.

The information written in the Star-sisters' journals (see "Part II: Castle Naerytar"), specifically the passages and observations pertaining to a celestial event called the Eye of Myrkul, serve to foreshadow events chronicled in the final installment of the Mere of Dead Men series, slated for next issue. Ω



A pair of thieves trip the wizard's home security system.

PLUNDERING POPPOF

BY ANDY MILLER

It's what's inside that counts

Artwork by Bradley McDevitt
Cartography by Delfino

This is Andy's second contribution to the magazine. He writes: "Thieves rarely get to use their abilities for actual thieving. Here's a chance for them to really ply their trade."

"Plundering Poppof" is an AD&D® adventure for 2–4 PCs of levels 1–3 (about six total levels). The adventure is especially suitable for thieves and might be of particular interest to wizards looking for spells. It can be used as a short side adventure in any city.

Adventure Background

Word comes to the party (or thieves in the party) that the wizard Poppof is leaving town. The brooding, ill-mannered spellcaster was spotted heading south out of the city carrying an overnight bag.

Poppof's departure affords PCs an opportunity to plunder his abode. There are several reasons why the PCs might break into Poppof's house. The DM may select one or more hooks from the following list:

❖ A mage/thief in the party needs spells and has heard rumors that Poppof recently obtained several spellbooks from a dubious source.

❖ The thieves' guild is double-crossing Poppof (see below) and asks the PCs to break into Poppof's house to steal what they can.

❖ The PCs are hired to rob the house and deliberately leave behind some item that frames another evil NPC in the city.

❖ Poppof is suspected of stealing a rare and evil book called the *Ebony Grimoire* from the local mages' guild or city library. The mages' guild wants proof of the theft but does not want to involve the local militia (due to the nature of the book in question).

❖ Adam Stadd, the former owner of Poppof's house, left some of his belongings in the attic and wishes them returned. Poppof has refused the man access to the building, so Adam has turned to the PCs for help.

For the Dungeon Master

The wizard has, indeed, left the city. Poppof recently traveled to a nearby village to visit a fellow mage and won't be back for five days. He trusts that the guardians and spells he left behind can protect his house against

unwanted intruders. For added insurance, Poppof has paid protection money to the local thieves' guild to insure that they leave the place alone while he's gone. Since his spellbook is too valuable and large to safely carry on any kind of trip, Poppof has left it at home, taking only his traveling spellbook with him.

The shutters of the house are all tightly closed. The only uncovered window is the round pane of glass in the second floor over the door. No movement or lights can be seen in the house for as long as Poppof is gone. If the PCs ask about the mage at the local thieves' guild, the thieves tell them that the wizard's house is off limits and warn them to stay away from it. (If the PCs are asked to burgle the house, the guild disavows sending them if the PCs are caught.) Speaking with anyone in the neighborhood reveals the rumor that Poppof's spellbook is reputed to be at least three feet on a side—much too large to be contained in the valise he took when he left the city.

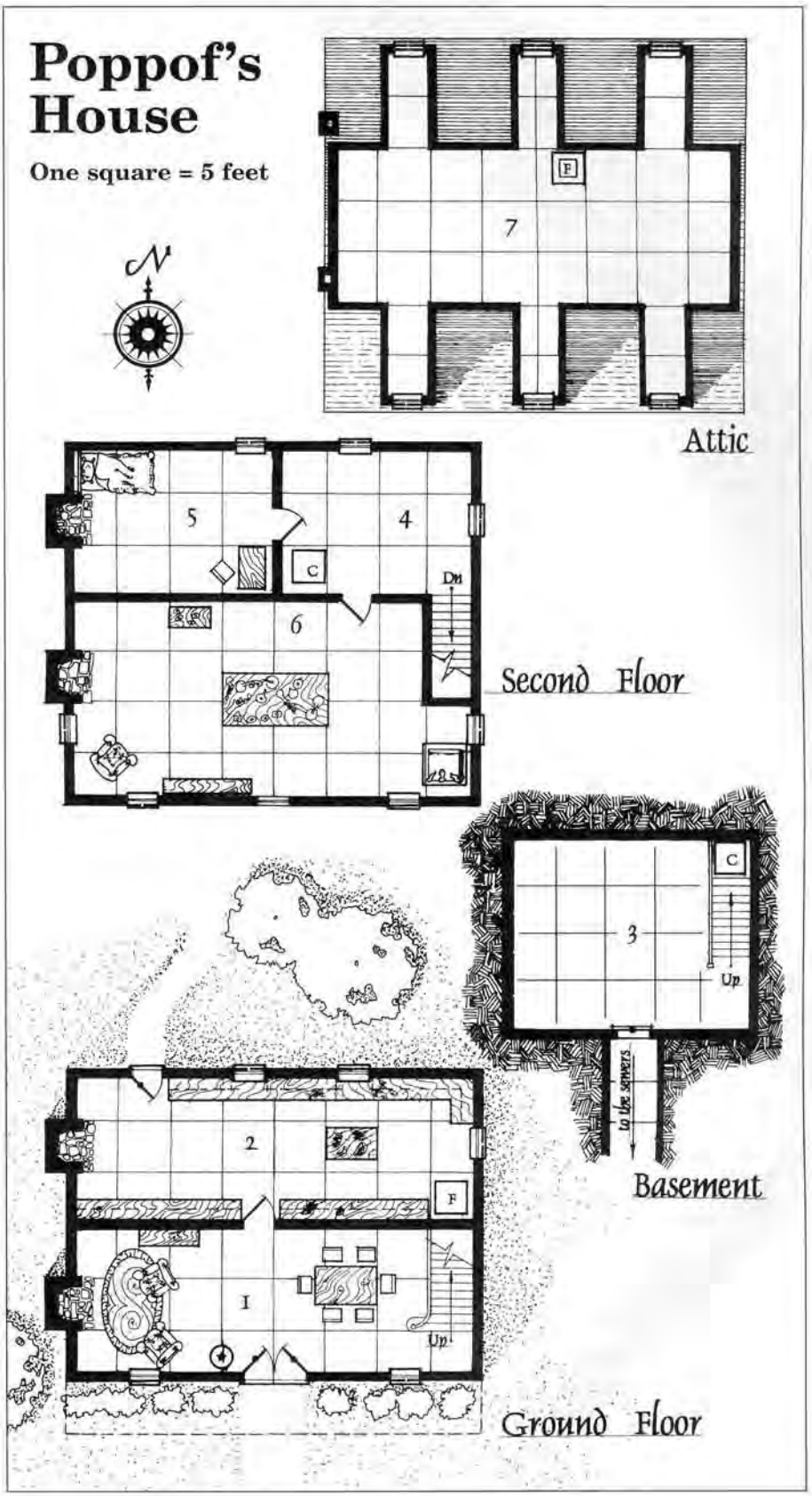
Poppof's House

The house is a small two-story affair that looks dark and foreboding. High, gabled roofs throw ominous shadows into the street, and two chimneys grace one side of the structure. There are shutters on all of the walls (barred from the inside), covering glass windows that are also locked.

The locked double doors in the front open onto the street and have a *Leomund's trap* spell cast on them. The back door is locked and barred from within. The second floor overhangs the ground floor in the front by five feet and is supported by decorative wooden beams.

Anyone breaking into the front door is spotted (day or night), and the local watch is called. The alley behind the house is dark and full of shadows at night—only rarely patrolled by the watch. Both chimneys are narrow, but a halfling or gnome can squeeze down them. The buildings around the house are two stories tall, and all are inhabited.

Local watch (2d4 soldiers): AL LN; AC 7; MV 9; F1; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 15; ring mail, spear, short sword.



1. Living Room. The main double doors to this room are locked and have a *Leomund's trap* spell cast on them. Read the following when the PCs enter the room:

> Two stuffed chairs stand in front of an empty fireplace. Next to them rests a small bookcase packed with leather-bound books. A well-built table surrounded by six hardwood chairs stands by one wall. Sitting on the table next to the front doors is a glittering statuette.

The stuffed chairs are worth 30 gp each. The mahogany table would fetch 100 gp, and the hardwood chairs are worth 15 gp each. The furniture is unwieldy to carry and would certainly draw the attention of the neighbors and the watch. The books are all mundane works of history, worth 3d6 gp each. The 12" statuette is made of gold, depicts an illithid, and is worth 200 gp. The eyes of the statuette seem to follow the viewer.

Guarding the room with orders to kill any intruders are four skeletal cats. The first pounces from under the table by the front door (–3 to opponents' surprise rolls), followed the next round by the other three. One of them emerges from under the dining table, another from the seat of one of the armchairs, and the last from the lower shelf of the bookcase. The cats attack until destroyed or turned.

Skeletal cats (4): INT non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 6, 5, 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SD edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; invulnerable to cold-based attacks, poison, and paralyzation; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear* spells; SZ T (1' tall); ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315 (skeleton, animal).

2. Kitchen. The cabinets and shelves are stuffed with dried foods. Several drawers hold various eating utensils, bowls, and plates. The table is sticky with residue. The back door to the house is locked and barred from this side. The trap door leads down to the basement (area **3**).

3. Basement. Rickety wooden steps lead down to a plain, dark cellar, though five crouched figures can be seen near a door on the other side of the chamber. These five skeletal hounds attack anyone who enters the room from either entrance, baying loudly. This can be heard from outside, but there is only a 25% chance that the watch hears the noise or is called to investigate. The hounds do not leave the basement.

The door on the south wall is locked and barred from this side. It leads into the sewers under the city.

Skeletal hounds (5): INT non (0); AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 7, 5, 4, 4, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SD edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; invulnerable to cold-based attacks, poison, and paralyzation; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear* spells; SZ S (2' tall); ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315 (skeleton, animal).

4. Hall. The stairs from area **1** lead up to a small hall. Waiting here are six unarmed skeletons. One stands on either side of each window, and one before each door. They attack anyone trying to pass through the room, using their claw-like fingers to inflict horrible damage.

A trap door in the ceiling leads up to the attic.

Skeletons (6): INT non (0); AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8, 8, 6, 6, 4, 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (claws); SD edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to charm, hold, fear, sleep, poison, paralysis, cold-based attacks, and death magic; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; *MM*/315.

5. Bedroom.

> A small bed stands by the fireplace in the opposite wall. Next to the door is an unassuming table with one drawer, a plain wooden chair beside it. A candle stands on the table.

In addition to several letters from various evil mages and priests (filled with vague references to powerful, evil magic), there are a half dozen quill pens, two large bottles of ink, 30 sheets of parchment, and four bone scroll tubes in the desk drawer.

6. Lab/Study.

> This place smells of sulfur and other unidentifiable substances, including rotting meat. A large table covered with glassware and various scientific paraphernalia dominates the center of the room. A bookshelf leans against the wall near a round, unshuttered window, and a plush, high-backed chair stands next to the fireplace. Against the inner wall is a small table with several vials on it. In one corner stands a small podium, completely covered by a book at least three feet across.

Hanging from a bar mounted behind the door is a bonebat. Poppof uses this creature as a messenger, but it is presently ordered to attack intruders. It retreats up the chimney if reduced to 7 hp or fewer, flying off to find Poppof (who realizes, by the creature's presence, that his lab has been invaded). Combat with the bonebat might damage the lab; any attack rolls of 1 (critical miss) have a 75% chance of breaking 10–40% of the glassware.

The glassware on the large table (if not destroyed fighting the bonebat) is worth 500 gp to any mage or alchemist wanting to build a lab. The equipment is delicate and bulky, making transport difficult at best. The shelves are stacked with 23 thick tomes discussing topics such as science, alchemy, and herbalism. Each book sells for 2d10 gp. On top of the bookcase is a volume bound in black leather. The cover page marks it as the *Ebony Grimoire*, an evil tome dealing with the undead. Marking the page that details the magical process for creating bonebats (see *MC Annual, Volume Three,* page 11 for details) is a blank scroll currently being used as a page marker.

The table against the north wall has spell components for all the spells in Poppof's book, except for the spells *read magic, Leomund's trap,* and *illusionary script*. The DM should determine how much of each spell component is here.

The podium in the corner of the room is solid marble, weighing 500 lbs. Chained to it is a large, metal-bound book. The covers of the book are composed of unfamiliar metals that shimmer in the various colors of the rainbow. PCs must make a Bend Bars rolls to break the chain holding the book in place. The chain otherwise has AC 5 and 20 hp.

Poppof's spellbook is trapped. The first page is printed with *illusionary script*. Those who glance at it must save vs. spell or feel compelled to leave the book and the house. (The effect wears off in three turns.) The book contains the following spells: *alarm, detect magic, gaze reflection, hold portal, magic missile, read magic, wall of fog; blur, flaming sphere, glitterdust, Leomund's trap, ray of enfeeblement, strength, web; fireball, fly, hold undead, illusionary script,* and *monster summoning I.*

Bonebat: INT low (7); AL NE; AC 7; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 4; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA paralysis; SD edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; never surprised; immune to paralysis, *charm, sleep,* and *hold*; SZ M; ML 20; XP 975; *MC Annual, Volume Three*/11.

7. Attic. This large room is empty. Like the rest of the house, the windows are tightly shuttered.

If the PCs have been sent to retrieve the personal belongings of the former owner of the house, there is a small, colorful wooden box nailed shut and tucked in one corner. When the box is moved, a faint scratching can be heard from within. If opened, a marionette pops out. Aside from this animated puppet, the box is empty. The marionette's mouth is glued shut with resin; it gestures for the PCs to help free its jaw of glue so that it can speak.

The marionette, Bobb, is a Chaotic Neutral troublemaker. Adam Stadd, its previous owner, inherited Bobb from a friend. Bobb caused Adam no end of grief, so he glued shut the marionette's mouth and packed it away in the attic. Adam later succumbed to his gnawing conscience and now wants the see Bobb set free.

If the PCs release the marionette, it befriends them, attaching to one PC in particular and remaining near him at all times. While Bobb is basically harmless, he talks and tells bad jokes incessantly and is completely insensitive to others' feelings.

Adam Stadd does not really want Bobb returned. If the PCs try to return it, they find Adam has left town. There's no telling if and when he'll return.

Bobb (marionette): INT average (9); AL CN; AC 7; MV 6; HD ½; hp 3; THAC0 19; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SD immune to cold, poison, paralysis, and mind-affecting attacks; instantly destroyed by a *warp wood* spell; SZ T (1' tall); ML 19; XP 7.

Concluding the Adventure

PC thieves who successfully rob Poppof should receive XP awards for any thieving skills used successfully during the adventure. The DM may also add a 250 XP story award.

The *Ebony Grimoire* is worth 2,000 gp to an evil mage. Any good-aligned character who destroys the tome should be awarded 500 XP. Freeing the marionette is worth 200 XP per PC, although PCs might regret ever doing so.

When Poppof returns and finds his house burgled, he does everything in his power to recover his property (save the marionette) and punish the thieves. The DM must determine if the wizard is successful tracking down the thieves. He hires some thugs to assist him, promising to pay them with money he has stashed elsewhere in the city. (Whether Poppof has has the money or whether he's lying to the mercenaries is for the DM to decide.)

Poppof (5th-level human wizard): AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; W5; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, D 16, C 14, I 16, W 10, Ch 7; ML 9; XP 975; staff, *bracers of defense AC 6, wand of paralyzation* (20 charges), traveling spellbook.

Spells: *jump, magic missile* (×2), *wall of fog; flaming sphere, web; fly.*

Poppof is 5'2" tall, unattractive, slightly overweight, with a wild mop of gray hair. He wears dirty brown robes and a matching hat with small skulls sewn into both. The mage does not like people in general, preferring the clean, smooth bones of the undead. Though not wise enough to be a necromancer, he has many connections to such individuals and uses them to his own profit.

Mercenaries (4 1st-level human fighters): INT average (9); AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; F1; hp 8, 6, 5, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15; chain mail, broad sword, helmet. Ω

MAP SYMBOLS

These symbols are used on most maps in DUNGEON® Adventures.

DOOR

DOUBLE DOOR

SECRET DOOR

LOCKED DOOR

WIZARD-LOCKED DOOR

CONCEALED DOOR

BARRED DOOR

PORTCULLIS OR BARS

WINDOW

ARROW SLIT

FIREPLACE

COVERED PIT

OPEN PIT

FOUNTAIN

SPIRAL STAIRS

STATUE

STAIRS

TRAP DOOR IN CEILING

TRAP DOOR IN FLOOR

SECRET TRAP DOOR

Continuing the Adventure

One of the adventures featured in this issue is "Under a Pale Moon." The adventure begins with the heroes' exploration of the mysterious Moon Steps of Northern Ergoth, culminating in an encounter with three voracious manticores. This section picks up where the adventure leaves off, developing some of the adventure hooks mentioned briefly in the module's Epilogue.

Hunting Draconians

Gellidus the White, Dragon Overlord of Southern Ergoth, is constantly striving to expand his realm and increase his power. To this end, he has sent his spies across Ansalon in search of powerful relics and magical secrets that could enable him to crush his rivals and enslave the human empire of Northern Ergoth.

Gellidus recently learned of the Moon Steps' existence and has sent a group of draconians to investigate. This band is led by a Sivak named Leukhas. The Sivak, traveling in the guise of a human archaeologist and mountaineer named Lukas Silverheart, is accompanied by a Bozak and four Baaz draconians who use heavy furs and tightly drawn cowls to conceal their reptilian forms.

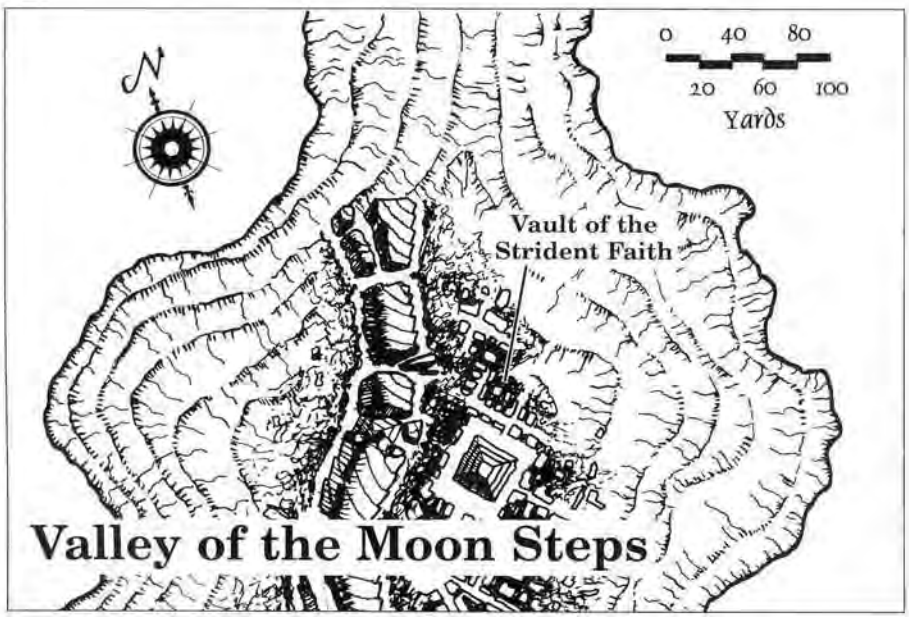
Leukhas has been sent to recover an item of fame from the Fourth Age of Krynn—a crystal mace known as Glittersmite. The weapon was crafted toward the end of the Age of Might and lost sometime after the Cataclysm marking the beginning of the Age of Despair.

Leukhas and his draconic retinue have traveled far to reach the Moon Steps. They have a rough map of the ruins surrounding the Moon Steps and plan to search for the Vault of the Strident Faith—the purported sanctum of Glittersmite and various weapons of renown.

When he encounters the heroes, Leukhas puts their skills to good use, asking them to help unearth the ancient vault. The crafty Sivak, in the guise of Lukas, claims that Gellidus is holding his family hostage and has threatened to kill them unless Lukas helps the draconians retrieve the crystal hammer and return it safely to Daltigoth. The Bozak draconian, Bryzum, plays the role of the villain, ensuring that "Lukas" does as told.

If the heroes see through Leukhas' ruse and refuse to help, he orders the other draconians to attack. Once the heroes are slain, captured, or driven off, he continues his search for the buried Vault of the Strident Faith.

Leukhas (Sivak draconian): INT high (14); AL NE; AC 1; MV 6, glide 18; HD 6; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12 or by weapon type +2; SD +2 on all saving throws and damage rolls; limited *polymorph* ability; MR 20%; SZ L (M in *polymorphed* form); ML 16; XP 975; unarmed.



When Leukhas is slain by a man-sized creature, he assumes the form of his killer. If slain by a small or large creature, he bursts into flame, causing 2–8 hp damage to all within 10 feet (no saving throw).

Leukhas, Sivak draconian. *Nonhuman.* Co 10, Ph 12, In 7, Es 7, Dmg +12, Def –5, also alteration [self], dive, death throe, fly, and resistant to magic.
See *The Bestiary*, page 176, for more information.

Bryzum (Bozak draconian): INT high (13); AL LE; AC 2; MV 6, glide 15; HD 4; hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1–4/1–4 or by weapon type; SA spells; SD +2 to saves; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 16; XP 420; long sword.

Spells (3/2): 1st—*burning hands, enlarge, magic missile*; 2nd—*invisibility, levitate.*

When a bozak dies, its bones crumble to dust; the dust then explodes, causing 1–6 hp damage to all within 10 feet (no saving throw).

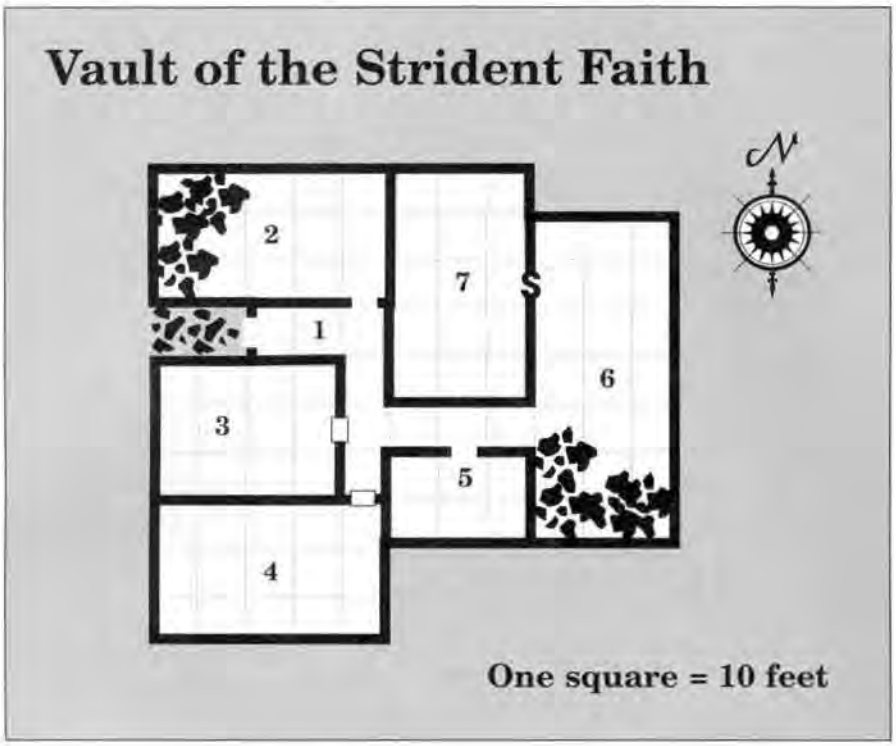
Bryzum, Bozak draconian. *Nonhuman.* Co 6, Ph 6, In 7 [49], Es 7, Dmg +4, Def –4, also death throe, glide, sorcery [aeromancy and pyromancy], and web.
See *The Bestiary*, page 174, for more information.

Baaz draconians (4): INT average (9); AL LE; AC 4; MV 6, glide 15; HD 2; hp 14, 11, 9, 9; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1–4/1–4 or by weapon type; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 15; XP 120; heavy crossbow, footman's pick.

When a baaz is reduced to 0 hit points, it turns into a stone statue. The person who struck the death blow must make a Dexterity check at –3, or his weapon is stuck to the statue. The statue crumbles to dust within 1d4 rounds, freeing the weapon. The draconians' weapons can likewise be recovered at that time.

Four Baaz draconians. *Nonhuman.* Co 8, Ph 6, In 6, Es 7, Dmg +6, Def –3, also death throe, glide, and pounce.
See *The Bestiary*, page 173, for more information.

Heroes searching Leukhas or his remains can find a charred fragment



of the Sivak's map showing part of the ruins and the rough location of the Vault. Deciphering the ruins requires an Intelligence check at –4 (no penalty if the map is somehow recovered intact).

A hero may attempt an *Average Reason* action to read the Sivak's charred map and discern the location of the Vault of the Strident Faith.

The Vault of the Strident Faith

The Vault of the Strident Faith is an armory buried amid the ruins of the Moon Steps. The entrance is an open doorway obscured by large rocks and filled with debris. Clearing the door requires 30 man-hours of excavation.

The Vault was constructed of huge blocks of mortared granite and has well withstood the passage of time, also its interior is choked with dust and crumbled masonry. The interior is dark, so some form of illumination is required. Ceilings are 10' high.

1. Dusty Corridor. This hallway is choked with dust and cobwebs. Otherwise it is empty.

2. Empty Chamber. The western end of this large, empty room is filled with stone rubble from the partially collapsed ceiling. The room is otherwise devoid of contents.

3. Barracks. This room contains 24 wooden cots that collapse into piles of useless refuse when touched. There is nothing else of interest here.

4. Barracks. This room contains 36 wooden cots, many of which have collapsed over time. Those that remain intact fall apart when disturbed. There is nothing else of interest here.

5. Captain's Quarters. The door to this room lies in the middle of the hall and looks like it was torn free of its iron hinges. The room contains the broken remains of a bed, a desk, a chair, and a wardrobe. An iron-bound wooden chest hidden beside the wardrobe is locked and holds three trays containing 49 pp, 520 sp, and 633 cp respectively.

6. Haunted Chamber. This partially collapsed room contains a wight—the remains of the captain who led the soldiers stationed at the Vault. The wight attacks intruders on sight but does not leave the Vault. In addition to the undead guardian, the room holds the collapsed remains of several weapons racks, as well as several dozen nonmagical weapons in poor condition.

A secret door in the west wall leads to area **7**. In general, heroes have a 1-in-6 chance of noticing the secret door; elves have a 2-in-6 chance; dwarves have a 3-in-6 chance.

A hero may attempt an *Average Perception* action to locate the secret door.

Wight: INT average (8); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA energy drain; SD silver or magical weapons to hit; immune to poison, paralysis, *sleep, charm, hold,* and cold-based spells; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; *MM*/360.

Wight. *Undead.* Co 6, Ph 12, In 5, Es 7, Dmg +4, Def –2, also drain [Presence], and immune to mentalism, normal weapons, and poison.

See *The Bestiary*, page 148, for more information.

7. Glittersmite. This room houses a collection of fine weapons stop marble pedestals. Among the weapons is Glittersmite, a *footman's mace +3* composed of transparent crystal as resilient as steel. On a natural roll of 20, the mace turns its target into solid crystal permanently. The target is allowed a saving throw vs. petrification to resist the effect. A crystalized victim has 5 hp per size category (T/S/M/L/H/G) and shatters if reduced to 0 hp. A *shatter* spell cast on a crystalized foe inflicts 2d8 hp damage. A *stone to flesh* spell restores a crystalized victim provided he is still intact.

The Narrator can determine what other weapons are found here.

Glittersmite is a resilient crystal mace with a +13 damage rating. Upon striking a target, the wielder may attempt a *Daunting Spirit [Presence]* action. If the action is successful, the target is turned to crystal. The effect is permanent.

A crystalized target can withstand damage equal to half its Endurance (Physique for monsters), rounded up. Ω